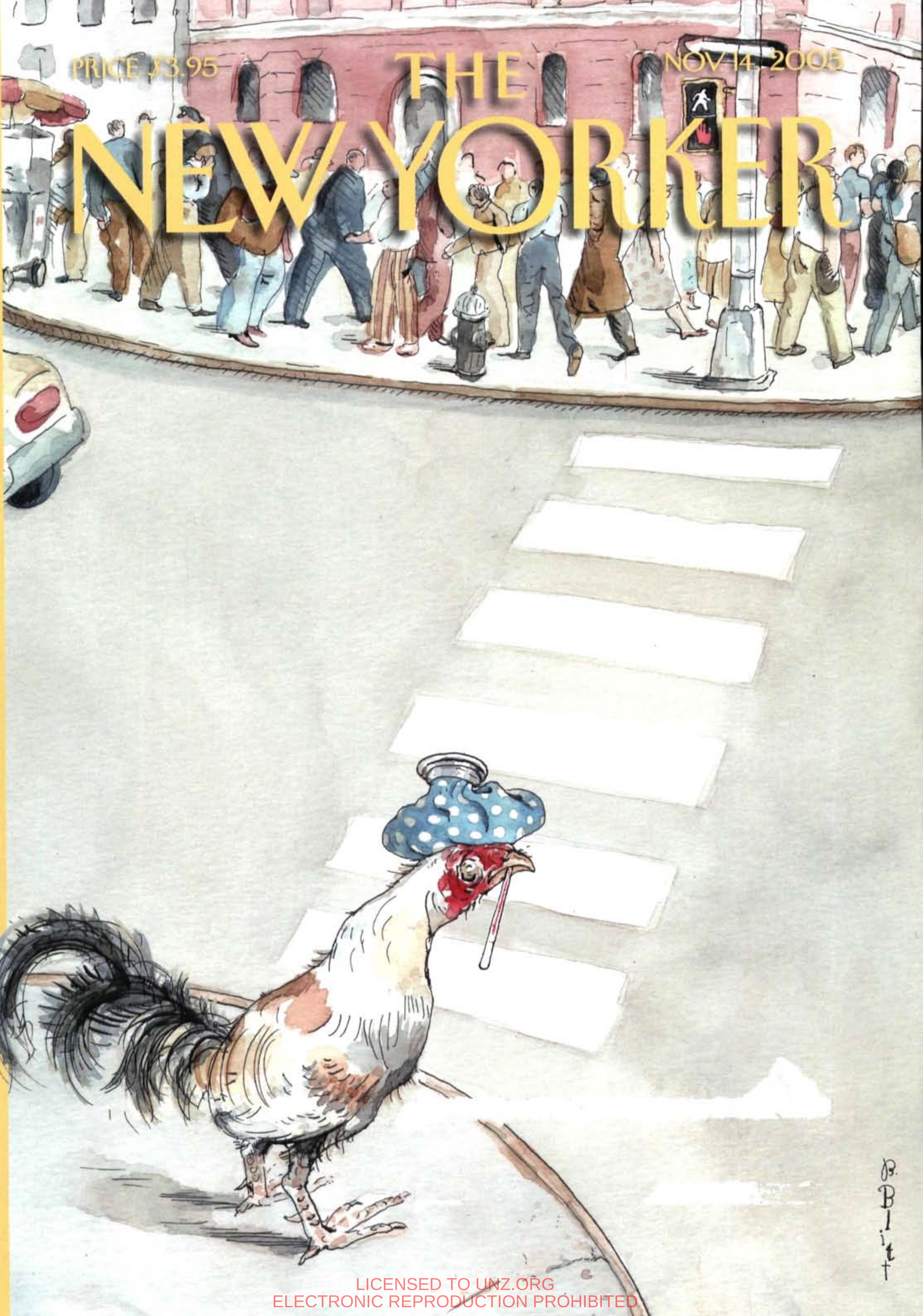
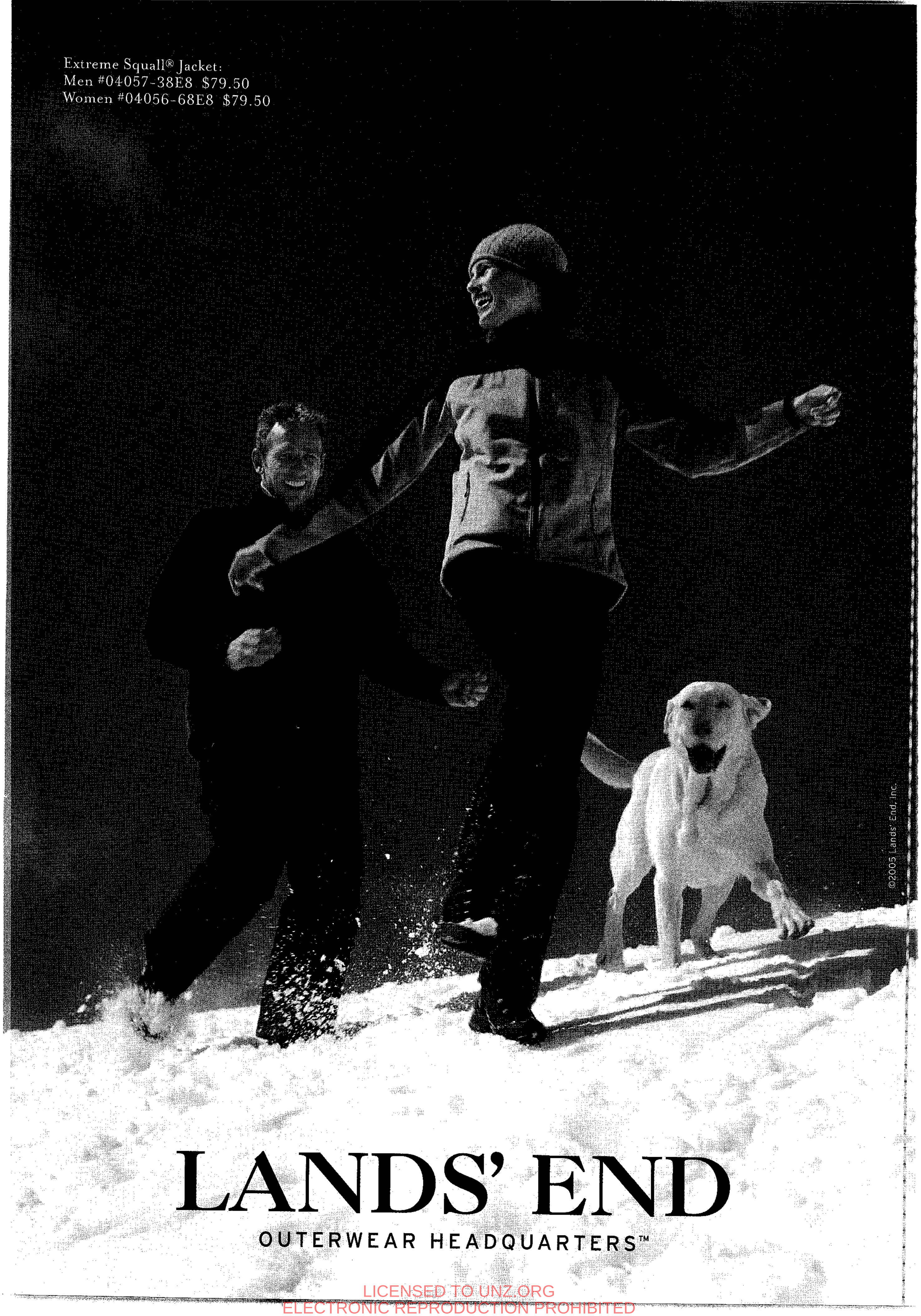
PRICE $3.95

THE NEW YORKER

NOV 14 2005

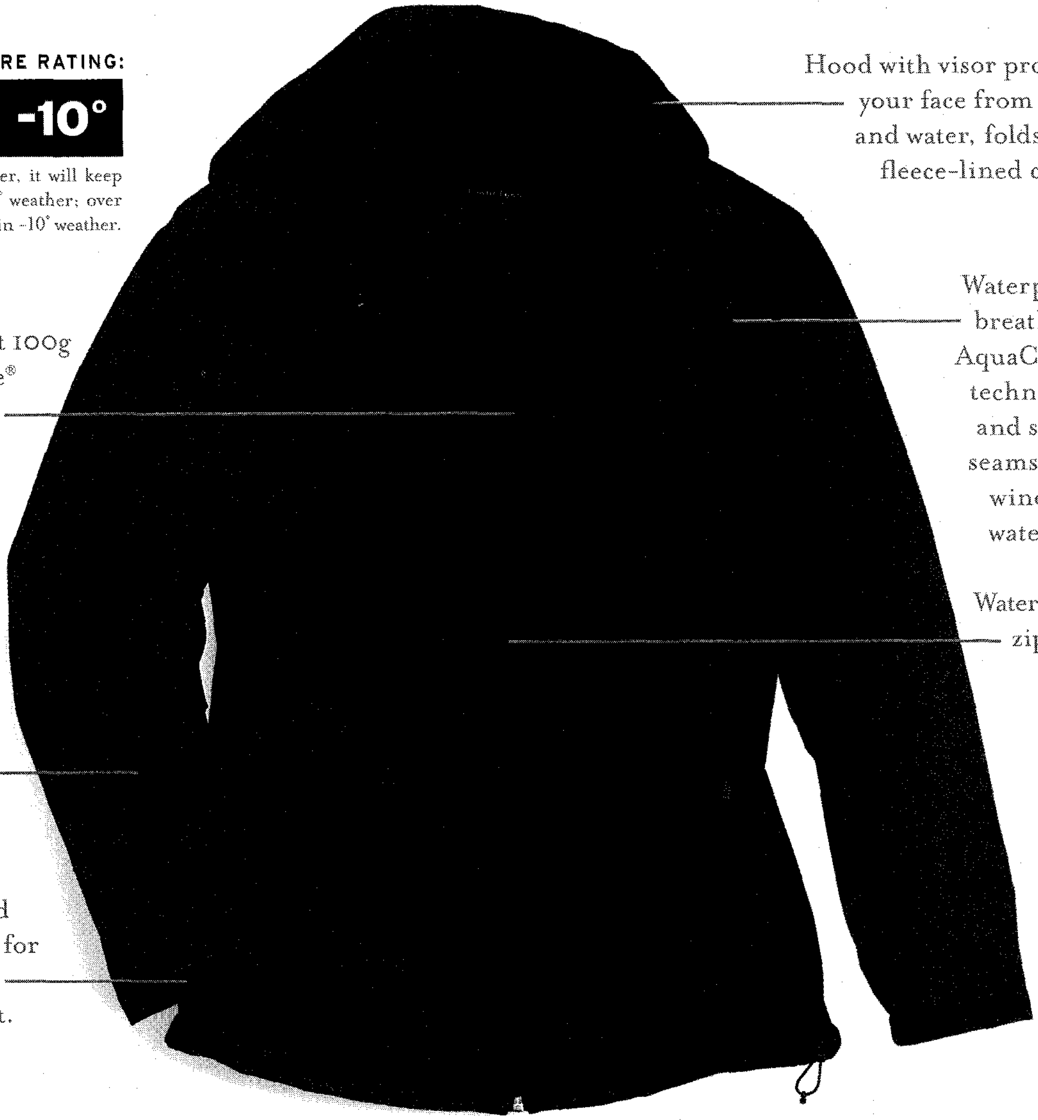



Extreme Squall® Jacket:
Men #04057-38E8 $79.50
Women #04056-68E8 $79.50

LANDS' END
OUTERWEAR HEADQUARTERS™

©2005 Lands' End, Inc.

YOU WANT *one* jacket to handle *all* weather conditions?



TEMPERATURE RATING:

10° -10°

Over a light layer, it will keep you warm in 10° weather; over layering pieces, in -10° weather.

Hood with visor protects your face from wind and water, folds into fleece-lined collar.

Lightweight 100g Thermolite® insulation under the quilted nylon lining.

Waterproof, breathable AquaCheck® technology and sealed seams keep wind and water out.

Waterproof zippers.

Available in 13 great colors.

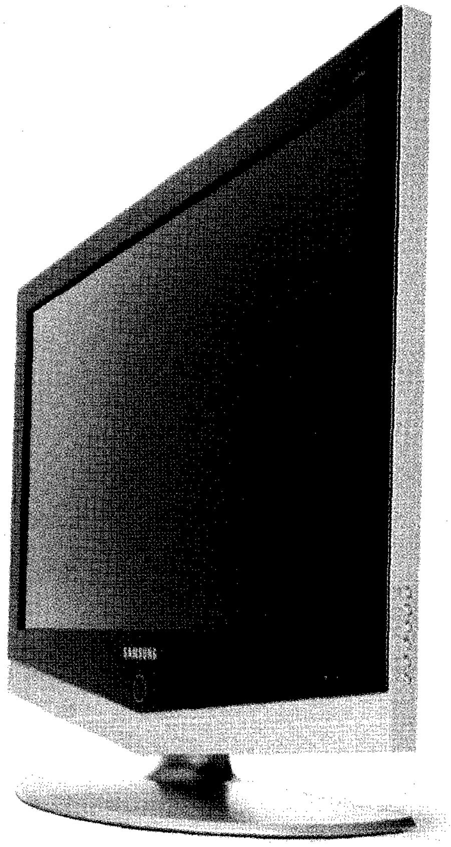
Rubberized wrist cuffs for slip-proof adjustment.

YOU NEED our $79.50 waterproof, breathable, windproof Extreme Squall Jacket.

You could buy a similar jacket elsewhere—for a price. Like $250! But why? Ours offers everything those jackets do. Plus one thing they don't: our promise that you can test this jacket in the rain, snow, slush...and if you're not happy, you can send it back for a full refund. Any time. **Guaranteed. Period.®**

1.800.960.9435 • LANDSEND.COM/OUTERWEAR • SELECT SEARS STORES

To us, creating beauty is just as important



At Samsung we realize that to succeed in business, we must also succeed in life.

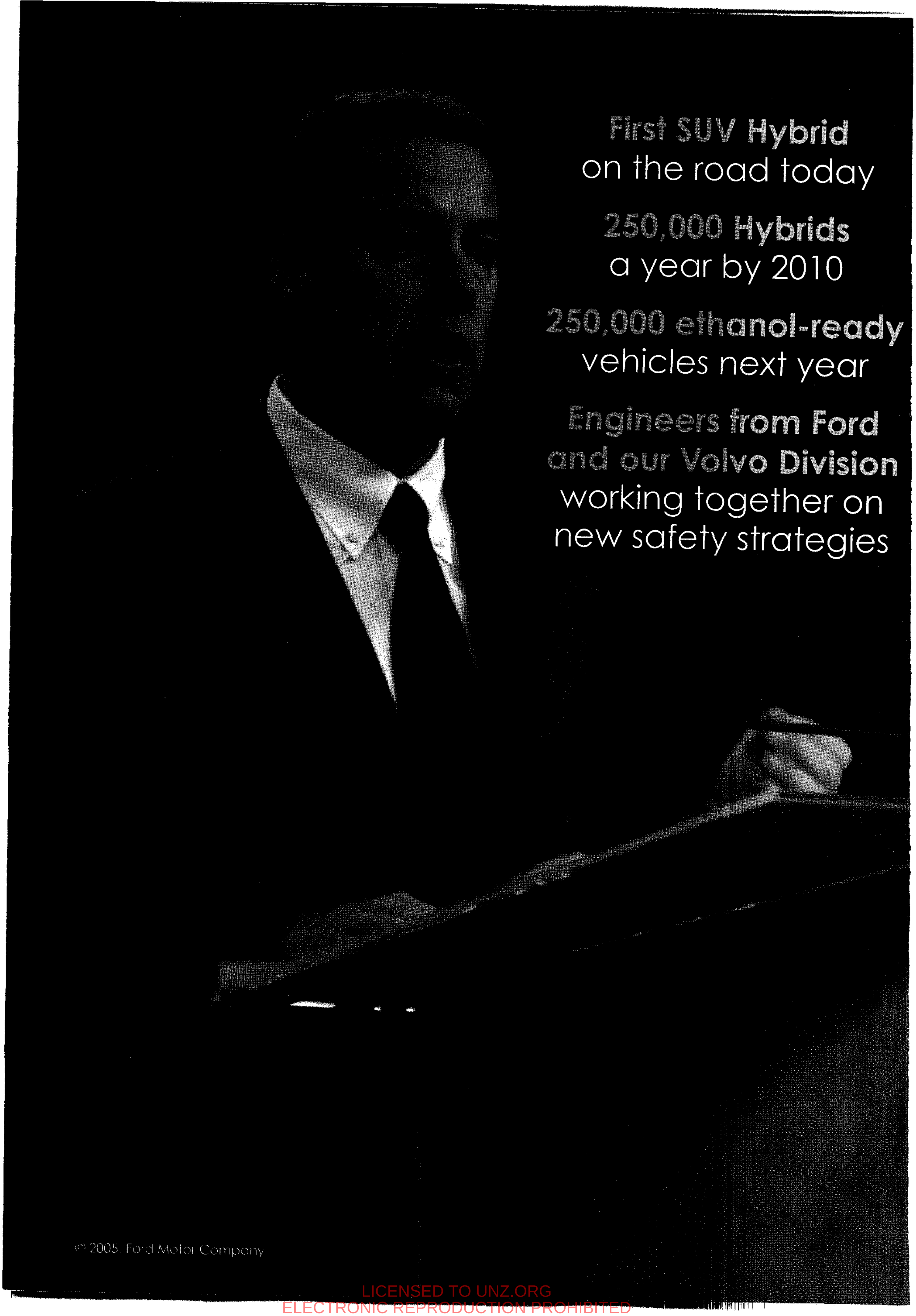
While we're committed to award-winning innovative design, we're also committed to the natural world around us. This extends to our many global projects designed to help clean up and preserve the beauty of the environment. It's all a part of our drive and dedication to make this a better world.

www.samsung.com

A better world is our business.

as preserving it.
SAMSUNG

©[illegible] Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. All rights reserved. Samsung is a registered trademark of Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.


First SUV Hybrid
on the road today
250,000 Hybrids
a year by 2010
250,000 ethanol-ready
vehicles next year
Engineers from Ford
and our Volvo Division
working together on
new safety strategies

© 2005, Ford Motor Company

INNOVATION
is our mission.

The guiding compass of everything we do.

Smarter, safer, more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Bill Ford
Chairman and CEO
Ford Motor Company

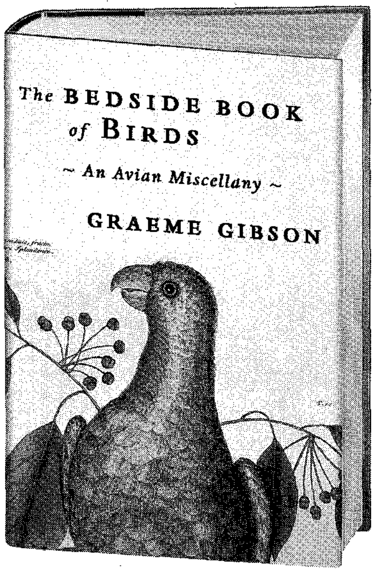
Ford

Driving American Innovation

ford.com/innovation

"Had I devoted myself to birds, their life and plumage, I might have produced something worth doing."

—John Ruskin, 1884



Naturalist, author, and passionate bird lover Graeme Gibson explores our relationship with birds, both in his own words and in those of history's greatest writers. More than 100 full-color images of the birds that have inspired writers throughout the ages are included.

◆

"Graeme Gibson's book is a stunner. The wealth of imagery and the range of intelligence are grand, the kinds of relationships with birds he sets out nearly bewildering."

—Barry Lopez

◆

Visit
www.bedsidebird.com
to view selections from the book's breathtaking artwork.

NAN A. TALESE
DOUBLEDAY

Available wherever books are sold
A Selection of Reader's Subscription, Quality Paperback Book Club and InsightOut Book Club

THE NEW YORKER

NOVEMBER 14, 2005

12 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
37 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Hendrik Hertzberg on the Alito pick; Iraq-war poet; more Harriet Miers notes.

Jane Mayer 44 A REPORTER AT LARGE
A Deadly Interrogation
Will the C.I.A. answer for a detainee's death?

Peter J. Boyer 52 THE POLITICAL SCENE
The Right to Choose
The Democrats compromise on a core issue.

Atul Gawande 62 ANNALS OF MEDICINE
The Malpractice Mess
Dealing with doctors' mistakes.

John Lahr 72 PROFILES
The Thin Man
Where Steve Buscemi's characters come from.

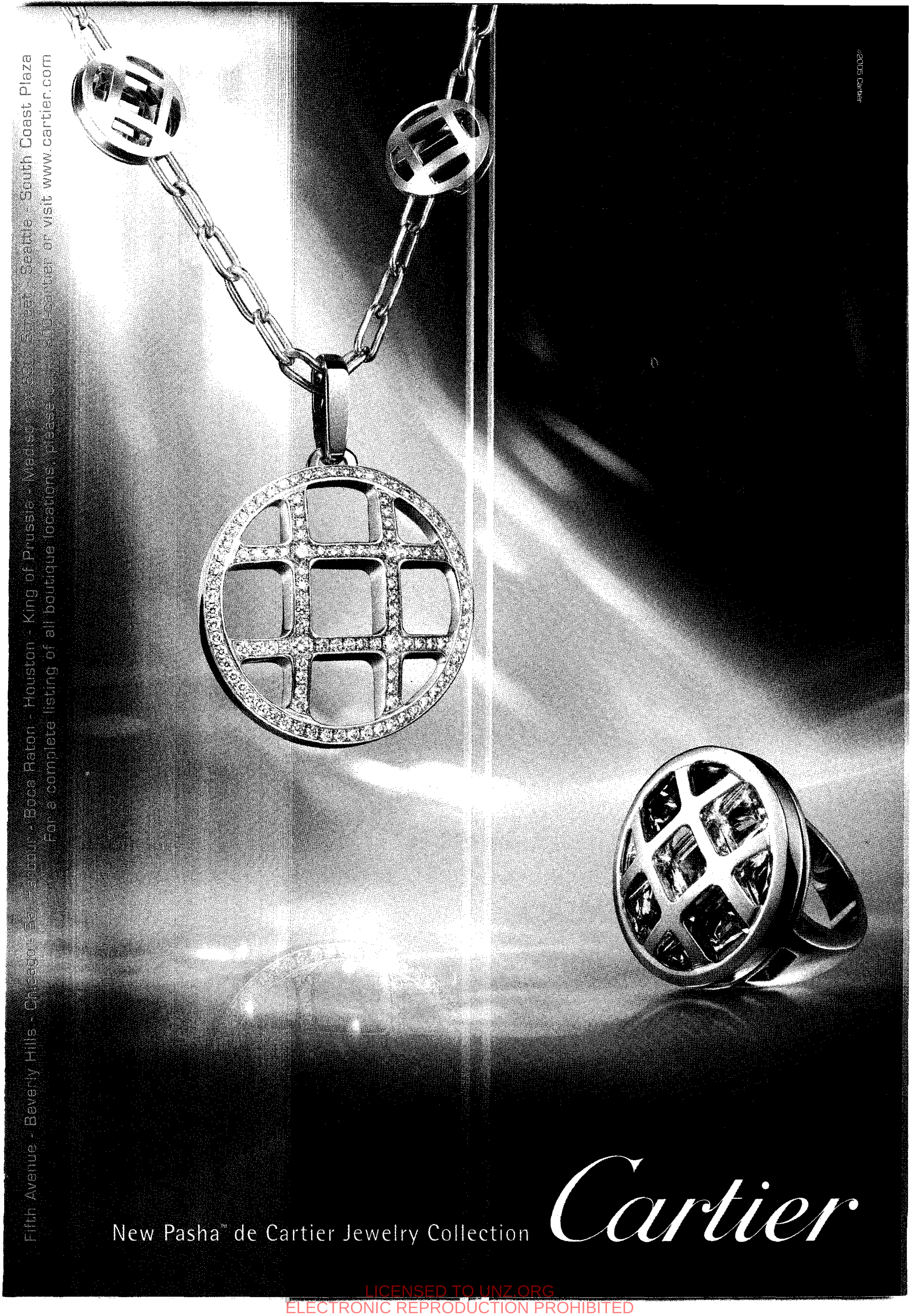
Paul Theroux 82 FICTION
"The Best Year of My Life"

THE CRITICS
Wyatt Mason 90 BOOKS
The novels of Javier Marías.
95 Briefly Noted
John Lahr 96 THE THEATRE
"Sweeney Todd," "See What I Wanna See," "Jersey Boys."
Sasha Frere-Jones 98 POP MUSIC
Houston hip-hop.
Anthony Lane 101 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"Pride and Prejudice," "Bee Season."

POEMS
Mahmoud Darwish 66 "The Owl's Night"
Meghan O'Rourke 80 "The Lost Sister"

COVER *"Crossing Over," by Barry Blitt* DRAWINGS *Liza Donnelly, Robert Weber, Emily Richards, P.C. Vey, Drew Dernavich, Jason Patterson, Gahan Wilson, Pat Byrnes, Danny Shanahan, Roz Chast, Leo Cullum, Frank Cotham, Jack Ziegler, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Christopher Weyant, Barbara Smaller* SPOTS *Christopher Brown*

www.newyorker.com



Fifth Avenue - Beverly Hills - Chicago - Bal Harbour - Boca Raton - Houston - King of Prussia - Madison at 69th Street - Seattle - South Coast Plaza
For a complete listing of all boutique locations, please call 1-800-cartier or visit www.cartier.com

©2005 Cartier

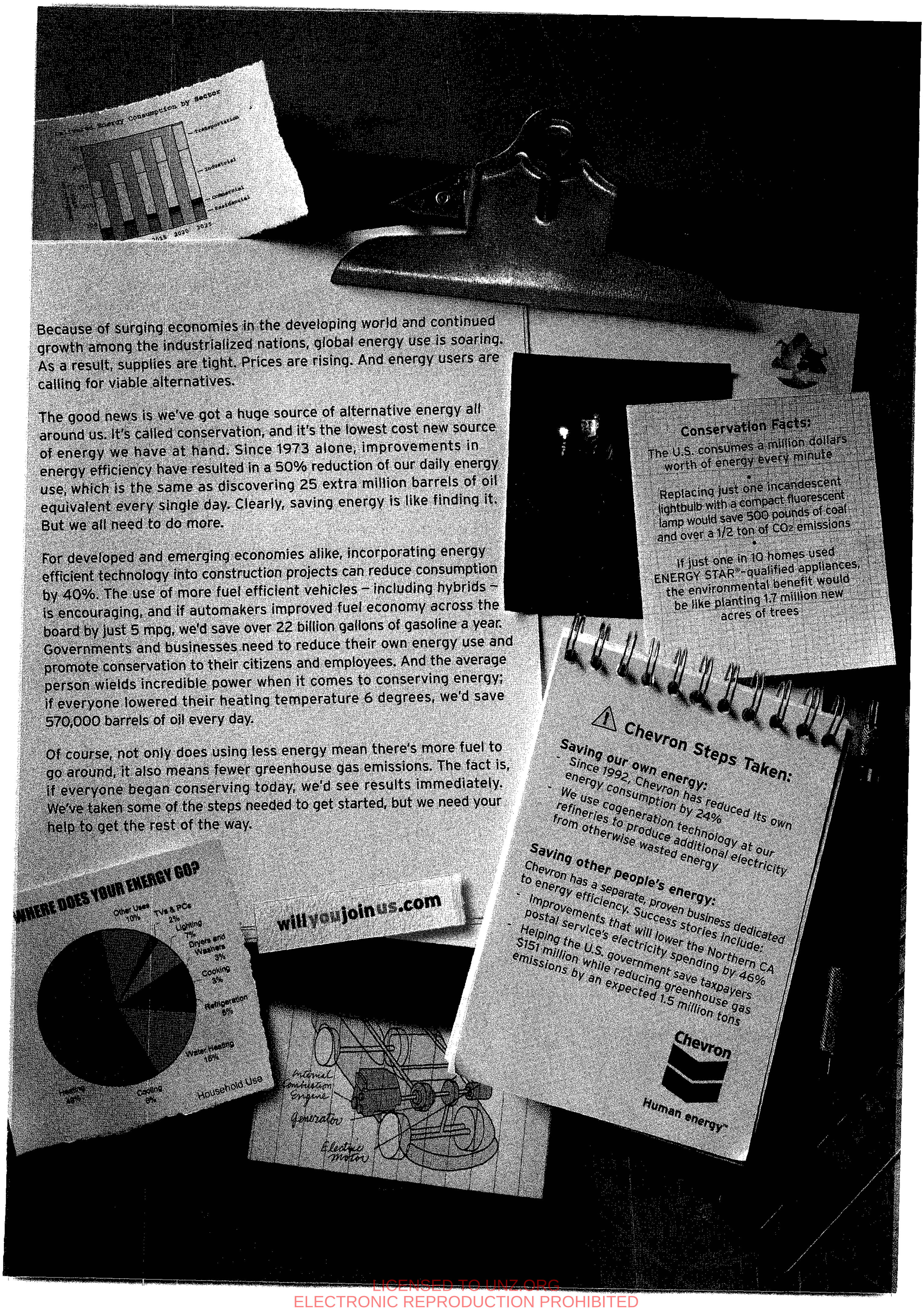
New Pasha™ de Cartier Jewelry Collection

Cartier

You use 25 barrels of oil a year.

So are you ready to do something about it?

CHEVRON is a registered trademark of Chevron Corporation. The CHEVRON HALLMARK and HUMAN ENERGY are trademarks of Chevron Corporation.
Chevron Corporation. All rights reserved.



Delivered Energy Consumption by Sector
Transportation
Industrial
Commercial
Residential
2015
2020
2025
WHERE DOES YOUR ENERGY GO?
Other Uses 10%
TVs & PCs 2%
Lighting 7%
Dryers and Washers 5%
Cooking 3%
Refrigeration 8%
Water Heating 16%
Cooling 6%
Heating 49%
Household Use
willyoujoinus.com
Internal Combustion Engine
Generator
Electric Motor

Because of surging economies in the developing world and continued growth among the industrialized nations, global energy use is soaring. As a result, supplies are tight. Prices are rising. And energy users are calling for viable alternatives.

The good news is we've got a huge source of alternative energy all around us. It's called conservation, and it's the lowest cost new source of energy we have at hand. Since 1973 alone, improvements in energy efficiency have resulted in a 50% reduction of our daily energy use, which is the same as discovering 25 extra million barrels of oil equivalent every single day. Clearly, saving energy is like finding it. But we all need to do more.

For developed and emerging economies alike, incorporating energy efficient technology into construction projects can reduce consumption by 40%. The use of more fuel efficient vehicles – including hybrids – is encouraging, and if automakers improved fuel economy across the board by just 5 mpg, we'd save over 22 billion gallons of gasoline a year. Governments and businesses need to reduce their own energy use and promote conservation to their citizens and employees. And the average person wields incredible power when it comes to conserving energy; if everyone lowered their heating temperature 6 degrees, we'd save 570,000 barrels of oil every day.

Of course, not only does using less energy mean there's more fuel to go around, it also means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. The fact is, if everyone began conserving today, we'd see results immediately. We've taken some of the steps needed to get started, but we need your help to get the rest of the way.

Conservation Facts:

The U.S. consumes a million dollars worth of energy every minute

•

Replacing just one incandescent lightbulb with a compact fluorescent lamp would save 500 pounds of coal and over a 1/2 ton of CO_2 emissions

•

If just one in 10 homes used ENERGY STAR®-qualified appliances, the environmental benefit would be like planting 1.7 million new acres of trees

Chevron Steps Taken:

Saving our own energy:

- Since 1992, Chevron has reduced its own energy consumption by 24%
- We use cogeneration technology at our refineries to produce additional electricity from otherwise wasted energy

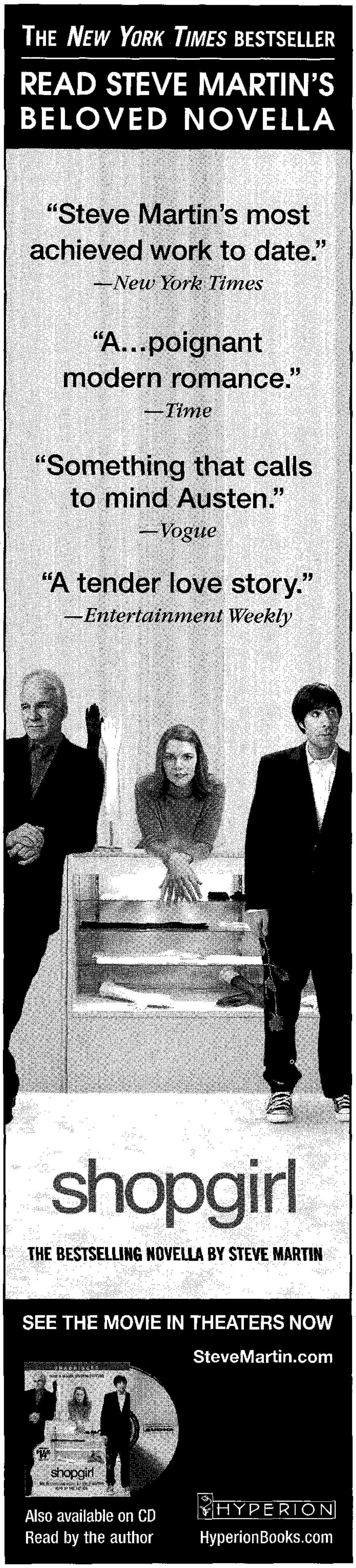
Saving other people's energy:

Chevron has a separate, proven business dedicated to energy efficiency. Success stories include:

- Improvements that will lower the Northern CA postal service's electricity spending by 46%
- Helping the U.S. government save taxpayers $151 million while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by an expected 1.5 million tons

Chevron

Human energy™


THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

READ STEVE MARTIN'S BELOVED NOVELLA

"Steve Martin's most achieved work to date."
—*New York Times*

"A...poignant modern romance."
—*Time*

"Something that calls to mind Austen."
—*Vogue*

"A tender love story."
—*Entertainment Weekly*

shopgirl

THE BESTSELLING NOVELLA BY STEVE MARTIN

SEE THE MOVIE IN THEATERS NOW

SteveMartin.com

Also available on CD
Read by the author

HYPERION
HyperionBooks.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Jane Mayer ("A Deadly Interrogation," p. 44) is a staff writer based in Washington, D.C.

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 37) is a senior editor and a staff writer. His book "Politics: Observations & Arguments" is available in paperback.

Lauren Collins (The Talk of the Town, p. 42) is a member of the magazine's editorial staff.

Peter J. Boyer ("The Right to Choose," p. 52) has been a staff writer since 1992.

Mahmoud Darwish (Poem, p. 66) has had several of his poetry collections translated from the Arabic, including "Unfortunately, It Was Paradise."

Barry Blitt (Cover) is the illustrator of the children's book "Once Upon a Time, the End: Asleep in 60 Seconds."

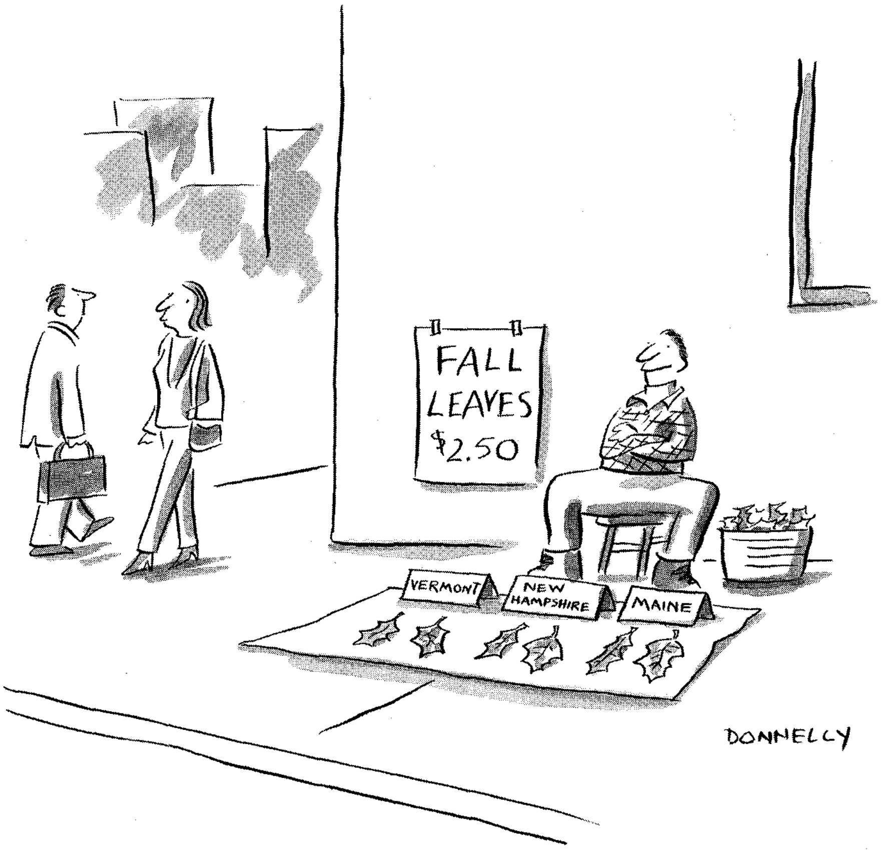
Atul Gawande ("The Malpractice Mess," p. 62) is assistant professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School and the author of "Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science."

John Lahr ("The Thin Man," p. 72; The Theatre, p. 96), the magazine's senior theatre critic, has just published "Honky Tonk Parade: *New Yorker* Profiles of Show People."

Paul Theroux (Fiction, p. 82) is the author of many works of fiction, including the novel "Blinding Light," which came out in June.

Wyatt Mason (Books, p. 90), a contributing editor at *Harper's*, has translated Rimbaud's complete works, and is preparing a translation of Montaigne's essays.

Sasha Frere-Jones (Pop Music, p. 98) is the magazine's pop-music critic. ♦



THE MAIL

WAR AND DISSENT

In Jeffrey Goldberg's article ("Breaking Ranks," October 31st), Brent Scowcroft quotes me as saying, "I believe that one of the things you've got to do to Arabs is hit them between the eyes with a big stick. They respect power." General Scowcroft is of course entitled to disagree with me—I would be surprised, even alarmed, if he did not. But he should disagree with what I really think and say. Yes, I do think that Arabs respect power, as do most people, and that they despise meek acquiescence in tyranny and aggression. But the pseudo-quotation he uses is a grotesque caricature, equally alien to me in language and in content. In its place, let me offer a quotation from the great Arabic thinker and writer Ibn Hazm, who died in 1064: "He who treats friend and foe alike will only arouse distaste for his friendship and contempt for his enmity."

Bernard Lewis
Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS

In describing the troubled genesis of the Sydney Opera House, Geraldine Brooks overlooks a major error in the building's conception which contributed, far more than any other aspect of design, to the building's spiralling cost ("Unfinished Business," October 17th). Jørn Utzon, the architect, and his structural engineer, Ove Arup, decided that the arching, pointed shells should sustain the considerable forces of gravity and wind without any additional structural framing. Arup defended this decision by claiming that "the challenge, the excitement and the technical problems encountered in what must be one of the most complex structures ever built" were "more appropriate to an autocratic ruler of a former era." In fact, builders in all eras have taken a keen interest in minimizing construction costs. When Christopher Wren rebuilt St. Paul's Cathedral, he created the profile of its dome using (relatively) lightweight lead-sheathed timber supported by an unseen brick cone that was reinforced with an iron chain. Wren's visually and technologically elegant dome has withstood the test of time. If Utzon had followed Wren's philosophy in using appropriate supporting structures for the striking sculptural roofs, his Sydney experience would likely have been more felicitous.

Robert Mark
Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Princeton University
New York City

As an architect practicing in Sydney, I was delighted to read Brooks's article about Utzon's inspired design for the Opera House. However, celebration of Utzon's achievement does not require the denigration of the late Peter Hall, the architect of the building's interiors and completion. While the auditoriums are quite different in approach from those Utzon proposed, they represent some of Australia's finest architectural achievements of that era. The plan layout and use of materials in the Concert Hall anticipate aspects of Disney Hall, in Los Angeles, by decades. The Opera Theatre, for all the limitations of its overhung pit and absence of wing space, succeeds in creating intimacy and audience engagement with the stage. Peter Hall also commissioned curtains, designed by the artist John Coburn and constructed of Aubusson tapestries in a polychromatic composition as rich as Utzon's ceilings. But, given the choice, opera and theatre companies will always opt for a neutral interior.

Andrew Andersons
Principal Director, PTW Architects
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

Humidifier & Purifier. Two in one.

Patented German engineering. Worldwide unique. Perfected with the newest cold water evaporation technology. 100% made in Germany. 10 year warranty.
Red dot design award winner 2003.

Choose the best.
No need for filterpads.
venta

Patent-No. 5,894,001

Red dot
design award winner 2003.

The "Wunderding" so simple - so efficient

7 outstanding benefits make Venta-Airwasher Europe's #1 bestseller for Humidifiers and Purifiers:

1. No filterpads, no wicks, no cartridges needed. Hassle free. It's so simple.
2. No problems with white dust.
3. No ozone that might cause asthma problems.
4. Extremely hygienic and easy cleaning. No bacteria-ridden filterpads or wicks.
5. Easy, problem-free maintenance; robust and durable construction.
6. Invisible humidification by cold evaporation, recognized as the best possible technique.
7. Pure water evaporates; impurities, stale tobacco smoke and odors are trapped in the water.

More than 10,000 doctors have bought Venta-Airwashers for themselves and their families.

Ask for your local retailer.
Call for a 14 days cost-free test.
1-888-333-8218 • www.venta-airwasher.com

BED BATH & BEYOND ACE Hardware LINENS-N-THINGS True Value

venta® AIRWASHER

Venta-Airwasher LLC, 1360 Hamilton Parkway, Itasca, Illinois 60143, phone: (630) 285-1188 · fax: (630) 285-1187

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
13	14	15	9	10	11	12

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
CYCLE OF LIFE

Playwrights Horizons presents Christopher Durang's new play, "Miss Witherspoon," a fantastical comedy in which a dead woman is continually reincarnated against her wishes. The Tony-nominated writer-director Emily Mann directs. (See page 16.)

NIGHT LIFE
BEHIND THE MUSIC

Country music's top names take over Madison Square Garden this week when the genre's annual televised awards show leaves Nashville for the first time in its nearly forty-year history. In the days before the big gathering, Music City's finest songwriters are performing at Joe's Pub. (See page 18.)

ART
DRAWING ATTENTION

"The Art of Richard Tuttle" arrives at the Whitney Museum on Nov. 10 after a run at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The show is the California-born artist's first full-scale retrospective, and will delight fans of the artist's post-minimalist drawings and constructions who saw last year's two-part show at the Drawing Center. (See page 22.)

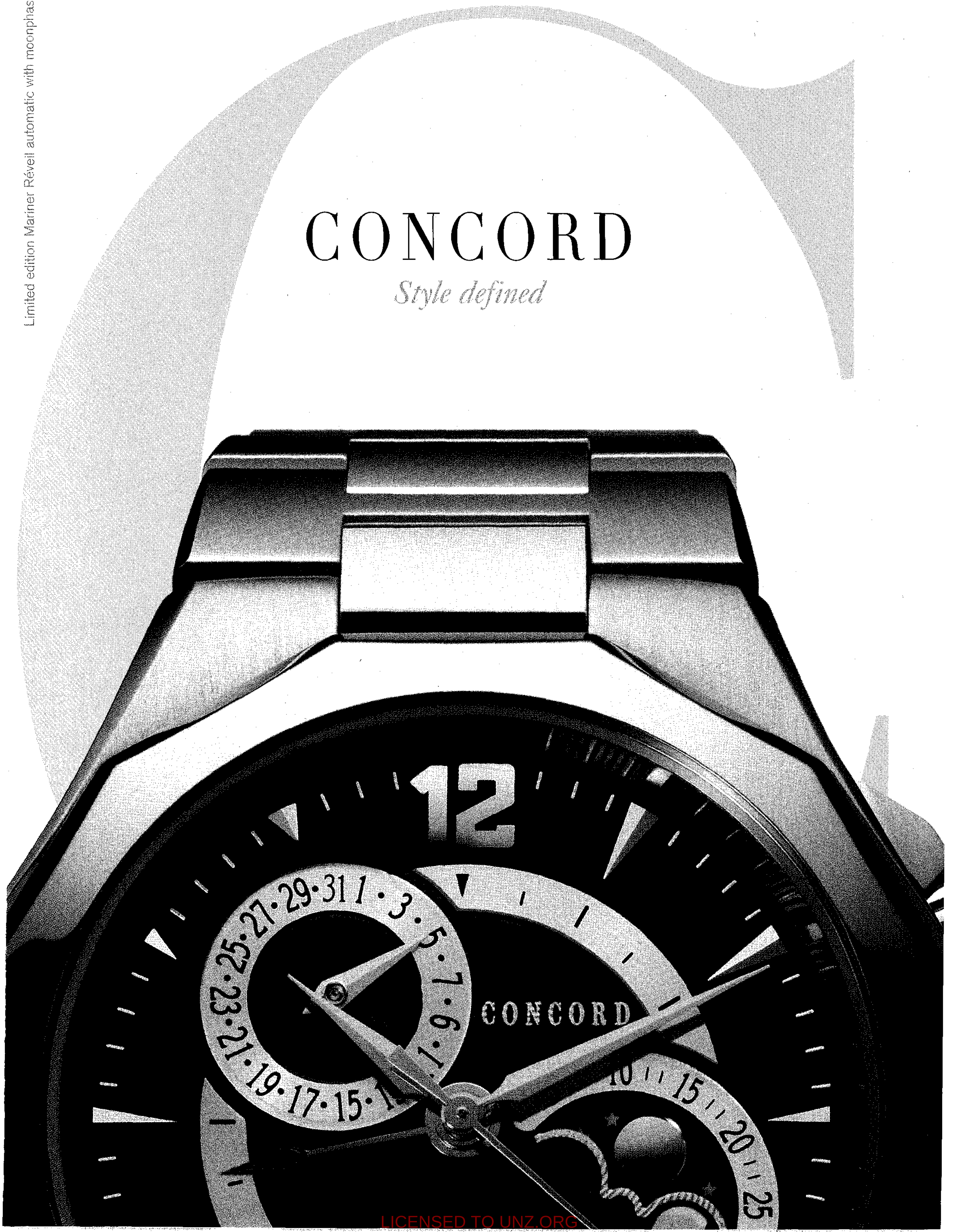
CLASSICAL MUSIC
LOST LEONCAVALLO

Those who yearn for the operas of the Italian verismo school should get themselves to Teatro Grattacielo's concert performance of Leoncavallo's spicy "Zazà," which opened at the Metropolitan Opera in 1920 and has not been heard in New York since. Aprile Millo, a cult soprano with a powerful stage presence, takes the title role. (See page 26.)

MOVIES
EX MACHINIMA

Video games plus people equals art—at least at the Machinima Film Festival, at the Museum of the Moving Image, which features films that were created using video games such as Halo and Quake. "Red vs. Blue," an ongoing absurdist adventure comedy in which the characters periodically interrupt their fighting for a bit of philosophical rumination, will be screened. (See page 33.)

"Woman of Many Faces: Isabelle Huppert," at P.S. 1. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.


Limited edition Mariner Réveil automatic with moonphase and alarm
CONCORD
Style defined
12
CONCORD
29·31 1·3·5·7·9·11
27·25·23·21·19·17·15
10 15 20 25

Tourneau
800 348 3332

CONCORD

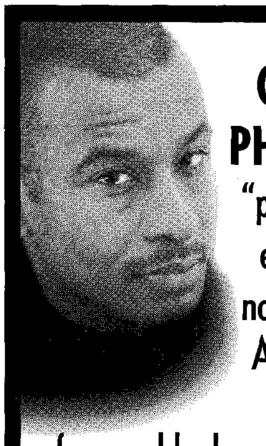
CONCORD
MARINER
19
SWISS MADE

©2005 Concord Watch Company. Call 888 812 6626 for more information

A passionate expression of individual style
A powerful portrait in geometric balance and precision
Solid stainless steel or steel with 18K gold
Masterful, Swiss engineered, water resistant
Concord-watch.com

Introducing the new Concord Mariner

CONCORD
MARINER
13
SWISS MADE



CARYL PHILLIPS'
"poignant,[1] elegant[2]" novel about America's first famous black entertainer, Bert Williams

DANCING IN THE DARK

"A fine and beautifully nuanced performance"
—Andrew Holgate, *The Times*, U.K.

"A singularly shattering work of art...All the tensions engendered by Bert's situation are released in the crises at the end of the novel, and with them a world of feeling that [has been] ready to burst."
—Laura Demanski, *Baltimore Sun*

"An exquisitely moving novel about a conflicted man... Only a writer as profoundly intuitive as Phillips could bring that shrouded history to light."
—Cathleen Medwick, *O* magazine

[1]**"Vivid...Poignant** ...We owe thanks to Caryl Phillips for bringing a new generation to Williams's story—and for adding another terrific novel to his catalog in the process."—Joshua Jelly-Shapiro, *San Francisco Chronicle*

[2]**"Lyrical and ironic** ...elegant" —Scott McLemee, *Chicago Tribune*

Photo © Michael Eastman

KNOPF aaknopf.com

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ABIGAIL'S PARTY
The New Group ("Avenue Q") presents the New York première of Mike Leigh's biting satire of British suburbia in the seventies, starring Jennifer Jason Leigh. Scott Elliott directs. Previews begin Nov. 14. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

BACH AT LEIPZIG
In this play inspired by actual events and written by Itamar Moses, seven rival musicians fight to fill the post of organ master at Leipzig. Directed by Pam MacKinnon. In previews. Opens Nov. 14. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE GENTLEMAN DANCING-MASTER
The Pearl presents the New York première of William Wycherley's Restoration satire about a pair of fops, one Spanish, the other French. Directed by Gus Kaikkonen. Previews begin Nov. 10. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

HAMLET
Michael Cumpsty takes the title role and reunites with the director Brian Kulick. In previews. Opens Nov. 13. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 212-677-4210.)

HILDA
A play by Marie Ndiaye about an upper-class Frenchwoman's obsession with her children's nanny. Directed by Carey Perloff. Previews begin Nov. 11. Opens Nov. 15. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

MISS WITHERSPOON
In a new play by Christopher Durang ("Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You"), Kristine Nielsen stars as a sardonic dead woman who is repeatedly reincarnated, much to her chagrin. Directed by Emily Mann. Previews begin Nov. 11. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

MR. MARMALADE
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents the New York première of Noah Haidle's comedy about adult behavior, as seen through the eyes of clever, acerbic children. Directed by Michael Greif. The cast includes Michael C. Hall ("Six Feet Under"). In previews. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

RFK
A drama about Robert F. Kennedy, focussing on the summer of 1964. Written and performed by Jack Holmes. Directed by Larry Moss. In previews. Opens Nov. 15. (The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

THE RUBY SUNRISE
The artistic director of the Public, Oskar Eustis, directs this play by Rinne Groff, about an inventor named Ruby, who is trying to develop an electrical television, and her daughter, a television producer who tries to tell her mother's story twenty years later. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

SEASCAPE
Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, about two couples who meet on a beach and contemplate life, death, and consciousness. With George Grizzard, Elizabeth Marvel, Frances Sternhagen, and Frederick Weller. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

SISTER AND MISS LEXIE
David Kaplan and Brenda Currin bring together the characters of two Eudora Welty novels, "Why I Live at the P.O." and "Losing Battles," in a play set to the music of Beethoven. Currin also stars. In previews. Opens Nov. 13. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

SOUVENIR
In a play with music by Stephen Temperley, Judy Kaye stars as Florence Foster Jenkins, an infamously bad classical-music singer who sold out Carnegie Hall in the nineteen-forties. In previews. Opens Nov. 10. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

A TOUCH OF THE POET
Gabriel Byrne stars as Cornelius Melody, an Irish immigrant who poses as a gentleman in Boston circa 1828, in a Roundabout Theatre production of the Eugene O'Neill play. Previews begin Nov. 11. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

THE WOMAN IN WHITE
Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical, adapted from Wilkie Collins's Victorian thriller, about an art tutor and his two pupils, all of whom are the victims of a crime apparently committed by a mysterious woman. In previews. (Marquis, 1535 Broadway. 212-307-4100.)

NOW PLAYING

ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR
Alan Ayckbourn's 1973 hit has been revived by the Manhattan Theatre Club, under the skillful direction of John Tillinger. The play, which exposes a bevy of oafish, parochial, bourgeois narcissists, takes place in three kitchens over a series of three successive Christmas parties, in daft suburban England, beginning in the upwardly mobile household of Sidney (Alan Ruck) and Jane (the excellent Clea Lewis), as Jane manically polishes the surfaces of her prefab kitchen. Ayckbourn is expert at constructing funny stage pictures, but the play itself is stale, and the nuanced tableau of British snobbery is mostly lost on an American audience. Even for a bromide, "Absurd Person Singular" is weak stuff. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/31/05.) (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

ALMOST HEAVEN: THE SONGS OF JOHN DENVER
Randal Myler ("It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues") directs a new musical that features twenty-eight John Denver songs performed against a tableau evoking the late sixties and early seventies. (Promenade, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

ASHLEY MONTANA GOES ASHORE IN THE CAICOS . . . OR WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
The author Roger Rosenblatt brings his mercurial, peppery wit to the task of anatomizing the current cultural mood. The resulting field guide to absurdity is nailed by the cast of four pros (Bebe Neuwirth, Jeffrey DeMunn, Jenn Harris, and James Waterston), who exchange wry observations and even hazard a torch song to John Ashcroft. The actors expertly deliver rapid-fire vignettes about television news, Michael D. Brown's post-FEMA career options—a piano bar in New Orleans—and, of course, the eponymous Ashley Montana, a *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model whose curvy, enhanced image is a kind of emblem of the age's inanity. Sharply directed by Jim Simpson. (The Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

CAMBODIA AGONISTES
Pan Asian Repertory Theatre launches its twenty-ninth season with a musical incorporating traditional Cambodian dance and masks, in which a blind Cambodian dancer in New York reflects on her home country's civil war and genocide. (West End, 263 W. 86th St. 212-279-4200.)

IN MY LIFE
An inspired train wreck. The unwieldy brainchild of Joseph Brooks (the composer of "You Light Up My Life"), this musical concerns the sudden infatuation between J.T. (Christopher J. Hanke), a songwriter with Tourette's syndrome, and Jenny (Jessica Boevers), an editor of personal ads. Their romance blossoms in a series of overblown pop ballads and is presided over, for some reason, by a glittery gay angel (David Turner) dressed in a variety of stunningly tacky costumes. Flanked by choruses of dancing pirates, skeletons, and French courtiers, Turner manages a few moments of sly humor amid the brazenly incoherent camp spectacle. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

JERSEY BOYS
A new musical about how Frankie Valli and the other members of the Four Seasons came up from blue-collar roots to form the successful pop group. (Reviewed in this issue.) (August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.)

MANIC FLIGHT REACTION
In Sarah Schulman's new play, the endearing Deirdre O'Connell plays Marge, an offbeat earth mother whose hippie persuasions have divorced her from reality—until her college-aged daughter, Grace (Jessica Collins), urges her to expose a past lesbian relationship with the wife (Molly Price) of a Republican politician. In a somewhat contrived turn

of events, the attentions of the American mainstream land with full force on Marge's doorstep, forcing her to reconcile her free-loving ideals with Grace's media-savvy brand of activism. What results is shrewd ensemble comedy. Trip Cullman directs. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

A MOTHER, A DAUGHTER AND A GUN
Olympia Dukakis, Veanne Cox, and George S. Irving star in a new comedy by Barra Grant, about the emotional relationship between mothers and daughters. Jonathan Lynn ("My Cousin Vinny") directs. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

NORMAL
The Transport Group's uneven musical about a nuclear family convulsed by a teen-age daughter's severe anorexia, though stylishly staged by Jack Cummings III, feels like a cross between an after-school special and experimental chamber work. A chorus of three women (all robed in white) portrays psychiatrists, schoolmates, and even suffragettes while the distraught family members shrink into the theatre's white-walled background. The minimal dialogue never provides a real structure for the appealing songs, which explore the relationship between the frenetic mother (Barbara Walsh) and her daughter (Erin Leigh Peck), who perks up only when she sings a power-pop anthem to anorexia: "Pretty to the Bone." Curiously, for a show with didactic aspirations, this is "Normal" 's catchiest number. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 212-352-3101. Through Nov. 12.)

THE ODD COUPLE
In this revival, surprisingly, Neil Simon's enduring masterpiece loses some of its flavor. Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick hit Simon's notes, but they don't quite capture the music of his humor. The Oscar Madison described in the script is the quintessence of loosey-goosey, but Lane's nerviness is part of his campy comic appeal—you can put him in sneakers and drape his portly body in an unbuttoned shirt, but he still has the metabolism of a hamster. Thus, the nervous alertness that rightly belongs to the meticulous Felix has been usurped by Lane's snappy performance, and Broderick has no choice but to play against the attack of his co-star. His Felix is a round-shouldered, flat-voiced milquetoast rather than the fussing, passive-aggressive "wife" we're expecting. The lack of animus in Broderick's sedate approach somehow lowers the heat in the argument. Still, it doesn't stop him from getting his share of laughs. (11/7/05) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

ON SECOND AVENUE
The Folksbiene Yiddish Theatre, currently in its ninety-first year, remounts this lovably hokey revue, which traces the Yiddish theatrical tradition from its Eastern European roots, in the late nineteenth century, through its wildly abundant heyday in downtown Manhattan in the early nineteen-hundreds. Mike Burstyn, whose parents were notable performers in the genre, leads the cast in a lively mélange of songs, jokes, and vaudevillian sketches. The show, by Zalmen Mlotek and Moishe Rosenfeld, doesn't attempt a thorough history but rather pays tribute to the form by capturing its rambunctious spirit. Performed in English and Yiddish, with supertitles. (J.C.C., 334 Amsterdam Ave. 212-230-6200.)

SEE WHAT I WANNA SEE
A new musical at the Public by Michael John LaChiusa ("The Wild Party"), loosely based on the short stories of Ryunosuke Akutagawa, tells contemporary New York tales of loss and hope. The ensemble cast includes Idina Menzel and Mary Testa. Directed by Ted Sperling. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

A SOLDIER'S PLAY
In Charles Fuller's 1981 Pulitzer Prize-winning melodrama, set on an Army base in Louisiana in 1944 and directed by Jo Bonney, Private C. J. Memphis (Mike Colter) is a superstitious, happy-go-lucky black recruit from rural Mississippi whom the sadistic black Sergeant Vernon Waters (James McDaniel) frames for murder in order to get him out of his company. The play unfolds in flashback, told by the play's eloquent narrator, Captain Richard Davenport (Taye Diggs), who unravels the mystery as he interviews the members of Waters's platoon. But the notional characters are given only a wash of personality and psychology, and the casting is uneven. The actors are proficient, but there's no chemistry between the antagonists, and

COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY

How do you make a nonprofit grow in an overcrowded field?

FIND OUT AT COLUMBIA. As the number of nonprofit organizations seeking corporate, foundation, and individual philanthropy has multiplied, the demand for highly skilled fundraising professionals has risen dramatically. Our part-time **Master of Science in Fundraising Management** teaches students fundraising essentials, as well as related business and communications skills.

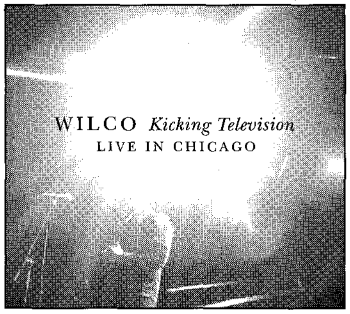
INFORMATION SESSION
Thursday, November 17, 2005
R.S.V.P. online.

SCHOOL OF
Continuing
Education
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Keep thinking.™

www.ce.columbia.edu/fundraising

Words on Music

Borders Pop music expert Andy Sibray says:
"Wilco's formidable reputation has been built over a decade on the road, and hard as it may be to contain that special alchemy on a CD, *Kicking Television* nails it, and is the first album to document the band's celebrated new lineup."



N
NONESUCH

"There is no band in this country matching the blend of avant garde smarts, twisted leanings and genuine, folk- and country-inflected songwriting genius of Wilco." – *Buffalo News*

"The world's most exciting live rock band."
– *Sunday Telegraph, London*

Recorded in May 2005 at Chicago's Vic Theater, this 2-CD set features 23 tracks at a special price.

BORDERS®

the stage-managed situation fails to sizzle. (10/31/05) (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

SWEENEY TODD
A revival of Stephen Sondheim's musical thriller from 1979. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

THIRD
The absence of event is what scuppers Wendy Wasserstein's genial but aimless new play (at the Mitzi E. Newhouse, directed by Daniel Sullivan). The title refers to the nickname of a Groton-educated college wrestling star (Jason Ritter) who finds himself in the literature class of an iconoclastic professor named Laurie Jameson (the admirable Dianne Wiest). Third writes a compelling paper on "King Lear," but Jameson's idée fixe of him as "a walking red state" prevents her from acknowledging his originality. Instead, she accuses him of plagiarism. Jameson provides no proof for her claim, and Wasserstein provides no real drama other than Third's eloquent soliloquy in his own defense. But the play is given a hefty push by the eighty-year-old veteran Charles Durning, who, as Jameson's forgetful father, transcends the play with his grace and his grief. (11/7/05) (Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

Also Playing

ALTAR BOYZ: Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG:** Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100. **FOOLS IN LOVE:** Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **THE GREAT AMERICAN TRAILER PARK MUSICAL:** Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **KARLA:** The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-352-3101. (Through Nov. 13.) **LATINOLOGUES:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **MOVIN' OUT:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100. **A NAKED GIRL ON THE APPIAN WAY:** American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. **ONE-MAN STAR WARS TRILOGY:** Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **ORSON'S SHADOW:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **SLUT:** A.T.A. Theatre, 314 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200. (Through Nov. 13.) **SWEET CHARITY:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING):** DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BAM CAFÉ
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—Nov. 11: The Australian expat **Greta Gertler** stops by with her tuba-rock band, the Extroverts.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Nov. 9: The singer and mandolin player **Sam Bush.** Nov. 14: The **Blasters** came out of the late-seventies Los Angeles punk scene with an interest in returning rock and roll to its gritty origins. The band fused rockabilly, country rock, and blues into a barrelling hybrid, and managed to be retro without sounding like an oldies act. Nov. 15: **Jon Anderson,** the lead vocalist and one of the founders of Yes.

CARNEGIE HALL
57th St. at Seventh Ave. (212-247-7800)—In the early nineteen-twenties, shortly after the dawn of commercial radio, the National Life and Accident Insurance Company built a radio station in Nashville, WSM (named for the company motto, "We Shield Millions"). On November 28, 1925, a former Memphis newspaper reporter turned popular radio host named George D. Hay put Uncle Jimmy Thompson, a championship fiddler, on the air and launched the "WSM Barn Dance" show, which he would later rename, in 1927, the Grand Ole Opry. The weekly broadcast is the longest continually running radio show in the nation. In celebration of its eightieth birthday, the Opry presents a slew of contemporary country stars, including **Trace Adkins, Brad Paisley, Trisha Yearwood,** and **Alison Krauss.** The show is on Nov. 14, on the eve of the Country Music Awards show (see Madison Square Garden).

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Nov. 9: The nerve-rattling blues-rock of the **Black Keys,** a drums-and-guitar combo out of Akron, Ohio. Nov. 10: The chart-topping country duo **Brooks & Dunn** is in town to host the nationally televised Country Music Awards (see Madison Square Garden). Here they play to a much smaller, sold-out crowd.

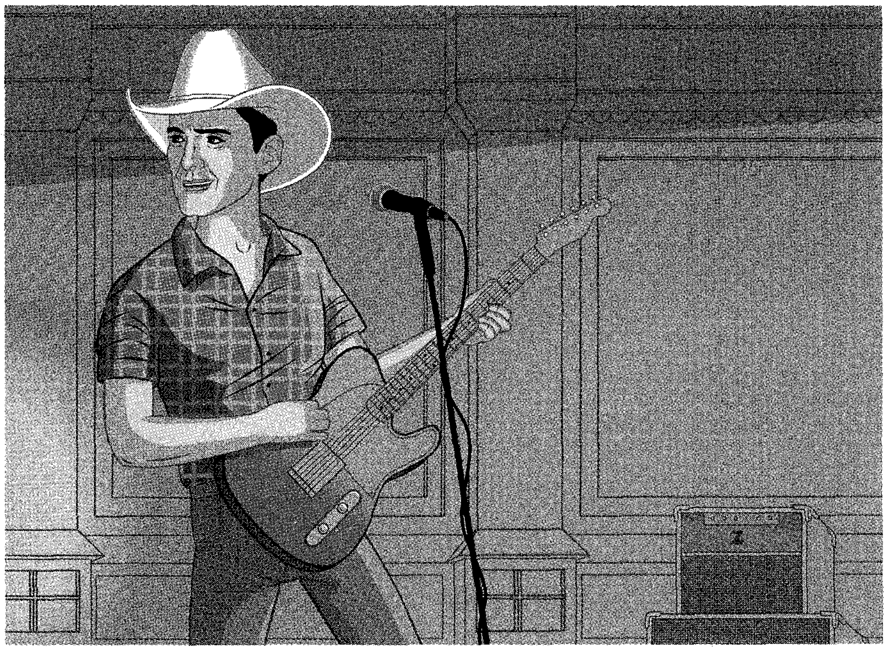
JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—This week the downtown music mecca turns into a local version of the Bluebird Café, the Nashville bar and restaurant famous for its songwriters' nights. The best of Music City's writers take the stage starting Nov. 9, with **Radney Foster, Rivers Rutherford, Mike Reid,** and **Hillary Lindsey.** Nov. 12 features **Brett James, Matraca Berg, Chris Lindsey, Aimee Mayo,** and **Jessi Alexander.** Nov. 13 belongs to **Bob DiPiero, Anthony Smith, Jeffrey Steele, Tim Nichols,** and **Craig Wiseman.** They'll each tell the stories behind their hits, perform the songs, and perhaps be joined by one or two of the stars who are in the city for the Country Music Awards.

THE KITCHEN
512 W. 19th St. (212-255-5793)—Nov. 9: In **"Transparent Processes,"** a program of live music and moving images that looks back to the psychedelic light shows of the sixties, the artists Ray Sweeten, LoVid, I Love You, and Gibson + Recoder find new uses for film projectors, television sets, oscilloscopes, and the like.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 15: The Country Music Awards show leaves Nashville for the first time in its history. The hosts are the rowdy duo **Brooks & Dunn,** and the talent on display includes **Dierks Bentley, Big & Rich, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson, LeAnn Rimes,** and just about every country artist whose songs have come within spitting distance of the radio dial. The non-country artists include **Jon Bon Jovi, Paul Simon, Billy Joel,** and **Elton John.**

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Nov. 10: London's **Art Brut,** peers of neo-post-punk acts like Franz Ferdinand and the Bloc Party, play simplistic guitar pop that's vaguely reminiscent of the Fall's angular attack. Nov. 13: **Quintron and Miss Pussycat,** a husband-and-wife performance duo from New Orleans, play a joy-inspiring mix of funky grooves and electric boogie-woogie. Their eccentric stage show, which includes puppetry, would be right at home in the D.I.Y. wing of the Smithsonian, if such a thing existed. Nov. 15-16: The **Arctic Monkeys,** an unassuming new English band that's been getting noticed for its energetic, punky pop.

NOKIA THEATRE TIMES SQUARE
Broadway at 44th St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 8-9: Montreal's **Simple Plan** are sheep in wolves' clothing, a teenybopper act disguised as a punk band. They have the stealth and guitar crunch of the latter genre, but their kid-friendly sensibility packs all the punch of an after-school special. Nov. 11-12: **Bauhaus,** back from the dead, again. The British goth godheads are on their second reunion tour. Expect an army of black-clad fans who never stopped mourning their first implosion to be out in funereal force.



The singer Brad Paisley helps the Grand Ole Opry turn eighty, at Carnegie Hall.

MICHAEL WELDON

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE
38 Water St., Brooklyn (718-254-8779)—Nov. 12: **John Cale,** one of the most influential underground-rock figures of all time. The classically trained musician with avant leanings (he once played with La Monte Young, the father of minimalism) was one of the founding members of the Velvet Underground, and he produced albums by Nico, Patti Smith, the Stooges, and Squeeze. His solo work is famously eclectic (his latest release, "blackAcetate:," was inspired by the work of the hip-hop producers Pharrell Williams and Dr. Dre). He carries a torch for Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys, adores Wittgenstein and literature in translation, and titled his autobiography "What's Welsh for Zen." And he once beheaded a chicken onstage.

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—Nov. 11-12: The "Brooklyn Shuffle" festival. The first night features the glistening global electro-pop of New York's own **Brazilian Girls.** The British m.c. and producer **Wiley** headlines the second night. Wiley has been on east London's underground grime

You and us. It's not just the financial strength of our business.
It's what it can do for your business.

At UBS, we understand that business is personal. We know that the choices you make as you build your business will have a profound effect on you, your family and your employees.

With your UBS financial advisor, you will have access to the resources of one of the world's largest managers of wealth, one of the fastest growing investment banks and a leader in asset management. He'll work with you to identify creative financing solutions designed to fund the growth of your business.

Your financial advisor can also discuss protection strategies, like long-term care and disability, insurance and estate planning.* He'll evaluate a range of retirement plans tailored to the needs of your employees, and explore a succession planning strategy to help address the needs of your heirs.

At UBS, our business is there to help yours. Our financial advisors are there to understand how. It's all part of a relationship we call 'You & Us.' UBS.

Wealth Management | Global Asset Management | Investment Bank

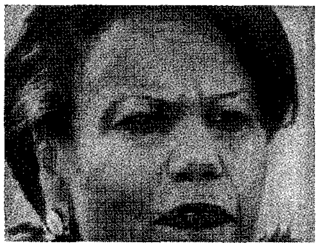
You & Us

UBS

*Neither UBS Financial Services Inc. nor its employees provide tax or legal advice. You must consult with tax or legal advisors regarding your personal circumstances. ©UBS 2005. All rights reserved. Wealth Management services in the U.S. are provided by UBS Financial Services Inc., a registered broker dealer offering securities, trading, brokerage, and related product and services. UBS Financial Services Inc., Member SIPC.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK ON TUYMANS

What is Condoleezza Rice to Luc Tuymans, the Belgian who, at forty-seven, is the most influential painter of his generation? A small, fuzzy picture



LUC TUYMANS, "THE SECRETARY OF STATE" (2005), COURTESY OF DAVID ZWIRNER

of the Secretary of State, glowering, jumps out from the mostly large, fuzzy pictures of decidedly bland subjects now at Zwirner, including a bed canopy, tree trunks, a table setting, and a pair of ballroom dancers performing in the Texas State Capitol rotunda (everything must happen somewhere). It's like Tuymans, famous for generating poetic intensity while painting about very little, to execute the occasional shocker (a Holocaust gas chamber, once), as if to test the resilience of both his style and his audience. As an artist, Tuymans follows—and improves on—Gerhard Richter in setting epistemological soft traps for viewers, exciting and then confounding interpretive cravings. Growing intellectual frustration overlaps dawning aesthetic pleasure in subtle beauties of extraordinary touch and color. (The pale hues in this show—lavender, plum, peach, citron—are practically aromatic.) In the end, your questions aren't answered; you just can't remember them.

—*Peter Schjeldahl*

scene since before the coming of Dizzee Rascal, the genre's biggest name. In fact, Roll Deep, the crew Wiley founded, had Rascal among its ranks as it helped forge the U.K.'s answer to hip-hop over the last few years. Wiley has created a slower and more stripped-down version of grime. He calls the mix of electronica, dancehall, and U.K. garage "eski," as in "Eskimo," because of the cold feelings in his heart (due to a split with his crew and his family).

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Nov. 10: The icy British outfit **Broadcast** plays electronic pop that has a human warmth beneath its stiffly textured surface. The band has been around for nearly a decade, but it has now shrunk to two members, the deadpan vocalist Trish Keenan and the multi-instrumentalist James Cargill. With their compatriots **Gravehurst,** who specialize in wistful guitar pop à la Scott Walker and Nick Drake.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—The pianist **Bill Charlap** can make any singer sound majestic, and Nov. 8-19 he works his magic here with his mother, **Sandy Stewart,** a maven of the durable standards that populate their affecting duet recording, "Love Is Here to Stay."

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Nov. 8-13: The annual **Django Reinhardt NY Festival** unites Dorado Schmitt and other fast-fingered guitarists from abroad with sympathetic locals, including the saxophonists Ken Peplowski, Harry Allen, and Lew Tabackin.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and, through Dec. 31, **Steve Tyrell,** a gruff-voiced entertainer who lives to make an audience feel good. It takes him only a few measures to clear the stuffiness from a tony room.

CARNEGIE HALL
57th St. at Seventh Ave. (212-247-7800)—Nov. 10: "Billie & Me." This tribute to Billie Holiday features a widely disparate group of vocalists, including **Dianne Reeves, Joan Osborne,** and **Rokia Traoré,** proving that Lady Day's influence endures.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Nov. 9-13: The **Bobby Hutcherson** quartet. Hutcherson, the man who brought modernism to the vibraphone with his sixties Blue Note recordings, is joined by a younger but equally prolix and exciting player, the saxophonist **Kenny Garrett.**

"HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ"
The twenties-and-thirties-loving buddies **Vince Giordano, Marty Grosz,** and **Ken Peplowski** take listeners back in time with the show "Back by Popular Request." The vocalist **Freddy Cole** will shake things up by bringing a touch of the postwar era to the proceedings. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 212-220-1460. Nov. 10.)

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Nov. 10-13: The Japanese fusion keyboardist **Keiko Matsui.** Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—Nov. 9: The Montreal-based pianist **François Bourassa** fronts a trio.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Nov. 10-13: The **Frank Morgan** quartet. An amalgam of Charlie Parker, Johnny Hodges, and Art Pepper, the saxophonist Morgan has a luscious tone and an authentic bebop sensibility. He can be both extravagantly heated and touchingly reticent; his New York appearances are now official events.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Nov. 8-13: The Cuban pianist **Bebo Valdés,** who was the musical director of the Tropicana in Havana before Fidel Castro seized power, left his homeland in 1960. Unlike his son, the mighty pianist Chucho, he's never been back. He lives in Sweden, and he makes his first New York City club appearances with the Spanish bassist **Javier Colina.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

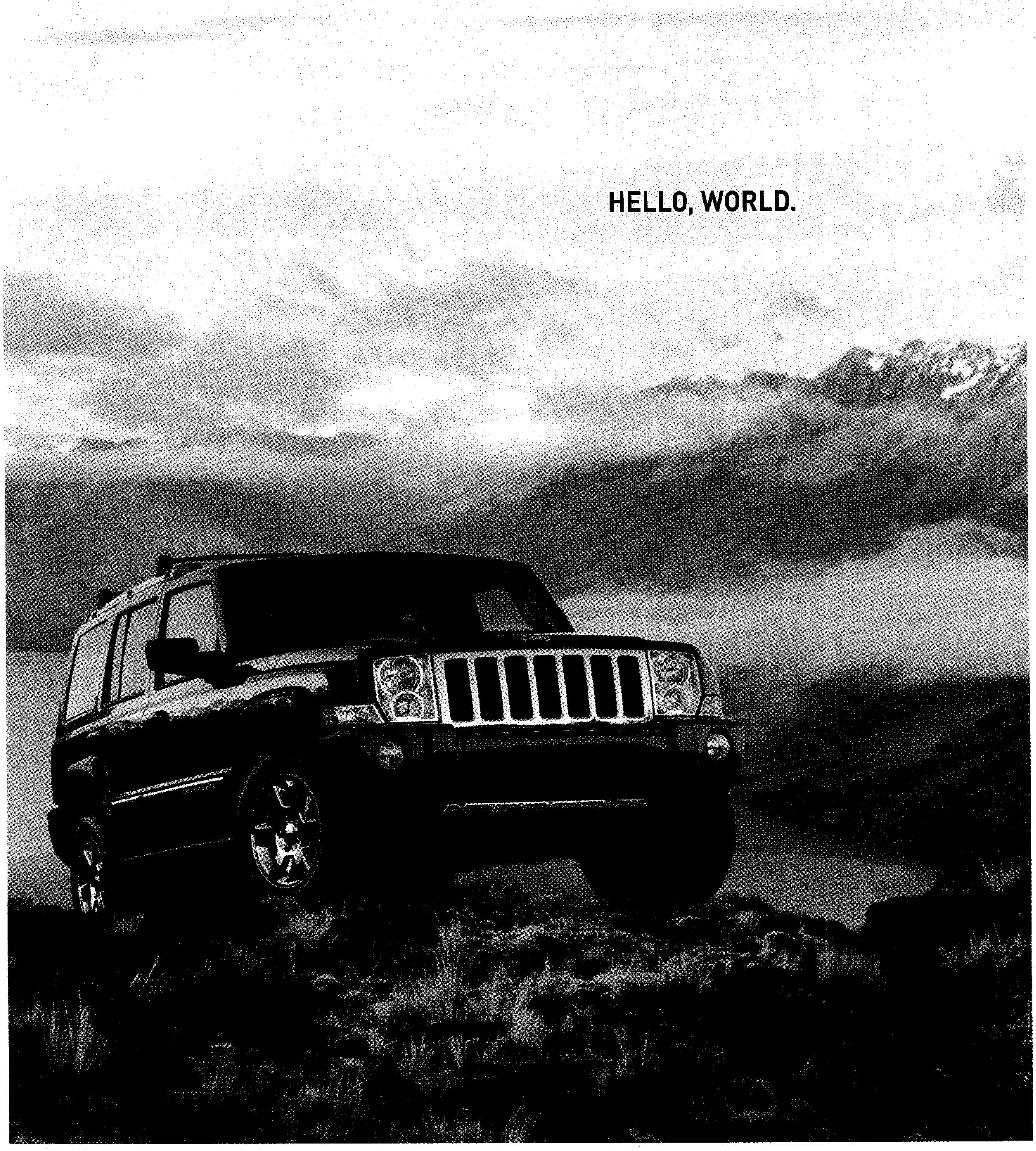
ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Santiago Calatrava: Sculpture Into Architecture."** Influenced by Brancusi, Matisse, and Giacometti as well as his fellow Spanish visionary Antonio Gaudí, Santiago Calatrava has always been as much a sculptor as an architect. His soaring, winglike buildings—including the proposed new World Trade Center transportation hub—are presented via delicate white architectural models and video tours while his monumental abstract carvings and casts in marble, granite, bronze, and steel fill out the crowded exhibition. Calatrava extends his longtime interest in kinetic sculpture with a comically ominous construction—like motorized dinosaur ribs—that looms above the main entrance. Through March 5. ♦ **"Fra Angelico"** presents some seventy-five ravishing paintings, drawings, and illuminated manuscripts by the fifteenth-century Tuscan artist, as well as additional works by his assistants and followers. Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"Vincent van Gogh: The Drawings."** Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Prague: The Crown of Bohemia, 1347-1437."** Through Jan. 3. ♦ The pre-Photoshop images in **"The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult"** purportedly depicted ghosts, spirit writing, ectoplasm, and the like. Through Dec. 31. ♦ The centerpiece of **"The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt"** is a fifteen-foot papyrus (ca. 1650-1550 B.C.), on loan from the New York Academy of Medicine, explaining the diagnosis and treatment of wounds to the head, neck, and shoulders by means both scientific and magical. Ointment jars, statues of healing gods, implements, and mummies are also on view. Through Jan. 15. ♦ The Costume Institute presents **"Rara Avis: Selections from the Iris Barrel Apfel Collection."** Through Jan. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Beyond the Visible: The Art of Odilon Redon,"** a retrospective of work by the French symbolist (1840-1916), is built around a gift of more than a hundred works from the Ian Woodner Family Collection. Through Jan. 23. ♦ **Elizabeth Murray's** exploded canvases occupy an idiosyncratic zone somewhere between Cubism, Surrealism, and Looney Toons. This career retrospective tracks the painter's progress as she tried to reconcile with minimalism in the late sixties and early seventies, then ultimately rebelled against it. The titles to her relief paintings are like responses to some tortured inner dialogue: "More Than You Know," "Do the Dance," "Don't Be Cruel." By the early eighties, her works were composed of multiple canvases that drifted apart like tectonic plates or unruly puzzle pieces. In recent paintings, she favors bright, child-friendly primary and secondary hues. Murray's slapstick aesthetic is an acquired taste but, like that of Carroll Dunham or Philip Guston, an essentially American and dissenting one. Through Jan. 9. ♦ **"Stillness: Michael Snow/Sam Taylor Wood,"** a small show of intimately scaled photographs and video works. Through Nov. 28. ♦ **"SAFE: Design Takes on Risk."** Through Jan. 2. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—For **"Seven Easy Pieces,"** Marina Abramović will re-create six decidedly uneasy pieces from the most active period of body and performance art: Bruce Nauman's "Body Pressure" (1974) on Nov. 9, Vito Acconci's "Seedbed" (1972) on the 10th, Valie Export's "Action Pants: Genital Panic" (1969) on the 11th, Gina Pane's "Self-Portrait(s)" (1973) on the 12th, Joseph Beuys's "How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare" (1965) on the 13th, and her own "Lips of Thomas" (1975) on the 14th. On the seventh day, this marathon of ephemera

Jeep, HEMI, and Quadra-Drive II are registered trademarks of DaimlerChrysler Corporation. BUCKLE UP Chrysler Financial



THE ALL NEW 7-PASSENGER JEEP® COMMANDER

Jeep®

3-Row Stadium Seating | Quadra-Drive II® 4WD* | 5.7L HEMI® V8* | CommandView™ Dual Skylights*
Electronic Stability Program | Side Occupant Protection System† | jeep.com/commander

It's Your World. Take Command.

*Available. †Always sit properly in the seat with the seat belt fastened.

To find solutions to global warming, we went to Princeton.

BP is investing in the Carbon Mitigation Initiative at Princeton University to develop practical approaches to carbon management. Bringing together people from a wide variety of disciplines, this unique program will develop new technologies to combat one of the biggest issues facing the planet.
It's a start.

bp

beyond petroleum®

bp.com

© 2005 BP p.l.c.

(part of the "Performa05" festival) closes with a new piece that Abramović has made for the occasion. (Nov. 9-15 from 5 to midnight.) ♦ The sprawling exhibition **"Russia!"** includes most everything you might think could fit under that rubric: gilt religious icons dating from the Middle Ages, Renaissance-era Western European paintings from imperial collections, romanticized portraits of peasant life, socialist-realist propaganda, early modernist masterworks from the collections of industrialists, videos made just this year. Through Jan. 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"The Art of Richard Tuttle"** opens Nov. 10. ♦ **"Raymond Pettibon."** Representatives from most of the significant subcultures portrayed in Pettibon's work are included in these thirty-seven drawings: the surfers gliding down ukiyo-e-style waves, the tragic-iconic baseball players, lonesome antiheroes and antiheroines inspired by pinups and comic books. An animated film created from drawings recalls William Kentridge's drawn animations but possesses little of their power. The glib voices accompanying the moving images are a sharp contrast to the ghostly, disembodied voice of the pictures, whose genuineness and authority are at the crux of Pettibon's art. Through Feb. 19. ♦ The retrospective **"Oscar Bluemner: A Passion for Color"** reveals a painter (1867-1938) who melded Old World influences with an architect's training and eye—updated later by the lessons of the Fauves, Die Brücke, and artists like Franz Marc—to produce images of buildings and landscapes broken into bright structural shards, like segments of stained glass. Through Feb. 12. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—Some one hundred paintings by the Netherlandish artist Hans Memling (ca. 1435-94) survive; of the thirty portraits, twenty are at the Frick for the exhibition **"Memling's Portraits."** Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Egon Schiele,"** an exhibition of a hundred and fifty paintings and drawings by the Austrian artist, who died in 1918 at the age of twenty-eight. Through Feb. 20. (Open Fridays, 11 to 9, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

"PERFORMA05"
This extensive program of performance by visual artists is projected to be the first of a biannual series. Artists include Marina Abramović, Laurie Simmons, Christian Marclay, Jesper Just, Sislej Xhafa, and Francis Alÿs, among many others. At venues around the city through Nov. 21. For schedules, locations, and information on tickets and reservations, see www.performa-arts.org.

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Woman of Many Faces: Isabelle Huppert."** Photographic and video portraits of the French actress by Nan Goldin, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Roni Horn, and Hiroshi Sugimoto, among others. Through Dec. 5. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

CHRISTINE CALLAHAN
Callahan's color photos of scruffy back yards and equally inelegant interiors were made mostly at and around her dead grandmother's house in Fort Lauderdale. Although the show's title, "Inheritance," is ironic, Callahan did come back from Florida with some great stuff: pictures that perfectly capture the lazy mood of life on the ragged edge of a resort town and the lush carelessness of landscapes that just happen. Her eye for detail (the abandoned raft, the misplaced mop, the artificial wreath) is matched by her sense of empathy for a place where

nostalgia is quickly bleached in the sun. Through Nov. 26. (Capsule, 521 W. 26th St. 212-695-1433.)

ROLAND FLEXNER
An extended visit to Kyoto inspired Flexner's series of drawings in a style called *suminagashi*, in which sumi ink is floated on water and transferred thence to paper. In the few seconds before it dries, Flexner manipulates its runnels and washes into exquisite, mysterious little landscapes filled with crevices and pinnacles that might be on the ocean floor, up a mountain glen, or inside craters of the moon. Balanced between simple, aleatory abstraction and dense fantasy, the richly detailed marks suggest illustrations for an epic or fairy tale one can't quite remember. Through Nov. 26. (Golden, 539 W. 23rd St. 212-727-8304.)

LUIS GISPERT AND JEFFREY REED
The short film "Stereomongrel," a collaboration between Gispert and Reed, follows the pilgrimage—or ordeal—of a prepubescent girl who travels from her deluxe apartment through harsh city streets to uneasy sanctuary in the Whitney Museum. The little heroine is uncomfortably clad in a red negligee and white bunny ears, with rabbity makeup. On her path we meet her angsty white mother, her bewildered dark-skinned father (he's a museum guard), squads of nubile, vacant females in alarming outfits, and paintings by American art stars. In the end, the girl is sacrificed to a James Rosenquist painting, which smolders and chars to black. Also on view are a series of large color photographs, which fail to rise to the movie's provocations. Through Nov. 12. (Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700.)

DONALD MOFFETT
The trick of this show is that it's not about painting: it's about presentation. The uninitiated—or the infrequent visitor to Boesky—might not register what cognoscenti will: the exhibition space has been compressed to less than half its normal size, thanks to a new Sheetrock wall; harsh fluorescent bulbs, more common to down-market retail than glossy Chelsea cubes, have replaced the subtleties of halogen. Piped-in harmonica music provides a disjointed soundtrack for post-Process canvases made with toothsome strips of silver paint. The show's title, "Hippie Shit," seems, like much else here, a throwaway gesture, but it counters the impulse to read the whole proceedings as art business as usual. Through Nov. 12. (535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.)

SHIRIN NESHAT
Iranian-born Neshat's latest exegesis on the condition of women in the Middle East takes place in a brothel, a bathhouse, and outside a mosque—but most of the action occurs inside the fragile psyche of a prostitute named Zarin. The film, based on a novel by Shahrnush Parsipur, lacks subtitles, but none are needed. When Zarin (played by an alarmingly gaunt actress) begins to see her johns—and ultimately all men—as faceless zombies, Neshat's set piece crumbles into a "Night of the Living Dead" tale of horror, flight, and self-excoriation. Despite the colorful acting and location (Morocco), "Zarin" doesn't offer much in the way of nuance or fresh insight into the plight of women or the exploitation of sex workers. Through Nov. 12. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300.)

JOSEPH STASHKEVETCH
A velvety, moody hyperrealism pervades Stashkevetch's large-scale drawings in black conté crayon, executed on heavy paper that has been sanded to soften up its surface for the receipt of melting, dark marks. The virtuosity of Stashkevetch's technique makes up for a tendency toward the obvious in his subject matter; the drawings are divided into ugly/pretty, manmade/natural groups, setting images of a trash heap, a mud-spattered motorcycle, and a pile of discarded tires up against roiling ocean waves, piled river stones, and a cherry tree in flower. Through Nov. 12. (Von Lintel, 555 W. 25th St. 212-242-0599.)

DOROTHEA TANNING
A selection of paintings by a nonagenarian artist (also the wife of Max Ernst) whose work is better known in Europe. The "Insomnias" (1955-65) serve as transitions from her figurative, late-Surrealist œuvre into something more diffuse. The paintings tumble in and out of abstraction as they move from dreams, and the province of Surrealism, to prickly wakefulness. Churlish figures hover at the edges, although they're banished from a few canvases. The best ones conjure Ar-

To inspire solutions to global warming, we went to kindergarten.

Who will solve tomorrow's energy problems? Perhaps someone from BP's A+ for Energy program. Over the last two years, the program has awarded $4 million in grants and scholarships to 3,000 California teachers who came up with the most innovative classroom or extracurricular activities focused on energy conservation.
It's a start.

bp

beyond petroleum®

bp.com

© 2005 BP p.l.c.

shile Gorky, Francis Bacon, or something more contemporary. Tanning's restraint hampers the work at times; one wishes she had followed the lead of other American painters and let the brushstrokes fly. Through Dec. 3. (Kent, 541 W. 25th St. 212-627-3680.)

"FIRST LIGHT: TEACHING PHOTOGRAPHY IN KABUL"
These thirty quietly remarkable black-and-white photos were made by the first Afghan university students to learn photography since the fall of the Taliban and the lifting of its prohibition of the use of cameras. Their teacher, Masood Kamandy, a School of Visual Arts grad and curator of this exhibition, notes that "subjectivity is new" in Afghanistan, and some of the work has the tentative, anxious aspect of people testing this freedom. But there's also a vibrant sense of discovery and self-revelation here—not just in the image of a young man looking into a cracked mirror but in the prevailing presence of a luminous, clarifying light. Through Nov. 12. (Visual Arts, 601 W. 26th St. 212-592-2145.)

"Bodybuilding #9, 2004," by Brian Finke, currently on view at ClampArt.

"VII"
This new gallery opens with an ambitious and savvy show of more than fifty pictures by the nine established photojournalists who make up the four-year-old agency of the same name. Some of the work (James Nachtwey's closeup of a man in Rwanda with four slash wounds across his face, Ron Haviv's shot of a Serbian militiaman kicking a fallen woman in the head) is already quite famous, but much of it is unfamiliar and strikingly wide-ranging. Antonin Kratochvil's horrifying image of a murdered man in Haiti, his head skinned raw, would seem to have little in common with the poetic allusiveness of Joachim Ladefoged's pictures from Albania except a deep understanding of the art of reportorial engagement. Through Dec. 23. (Hasted Hunt, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-0006.)

Short List

BRIAN FINKE: ClampArt, 531 W. 25th St. 646-230-0020. Through Nov. 12. **MATT JOHNSON:** Taxter & Spengemann, 504 W. 22nd St. 212-924-0212. Through Nov. 12. **LISE SARFATI:** Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370. Through Nov. 26. **LUC TUYMANS:** Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Through Nov. 19. **"THE PLAIN OF HEAVEN":** 820 Washington St. Open Fridays to Sundays, noon to 6. For more information, call Creative Time, 212-206-6674. Through Nov. 20.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

CARL FUDGE
The camouflage paintings of Andy Warhol and erotic prints from Japan sound like an exciting pair of sources to hybridize. So it's disappointing that Fudge's paintings express more about the digital glomming and flipping of borrowed motifs than they do about intersections between the juxtaposed originals. Mostly crisp black on white—with a few backgrounds of Day-Glo orange—Fudge's paintings look like slightly pixellated Rorschachs. A second series of paintings, also riffing on Japanese prints, are richer visually and thus more successful, though they're still awfully chilly. Through Nov. 12. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 212-226-3232.)

GALLERIES-BROOKLYN

CARLOS ROQUE
Graffiti tags, isolated and remixed for gallery walls, take on an acid elegance in Roque's drawings. Floating like visible whispers across urban landscapes dotted with high-rise apartment blocks, parked or junked cars, and street signs, Roque's designs take on a ghostly, calligraphic quality without altering their original found forms. A large graffiti landscape here is accompanied by a room-wrapping wall drawing of asterisk-and-dot-shaped stars, black against the white "sky" of the walls. Hanging from the ceiling in the middle of the space is a turntable playing the soundtrack to "2001: A Space Odyssey." It's perhaps too pat, but evocative nonetheless. Through Nov. 14. (Joymore, 236 Grand St. 646-270-0376.)

DANIEL ZELLER / LYNN TALBOT
Zeller's fastidious yet wild drawings borrow from data sources like electron micrographs and satellite images to create fantastical topographies paradoxically rendered in quotidian pencil or pen and ink. Proliferating rivers, mountains, cancers, paramecia, and fibre-optic cables suggest themselves, as if Zeller were the god of a two-dimensional world where every cell, organic or inorganic, must be drawn into existence by hand. Also on view are Talbot's finicky post-post-Dutch still-lifes, where fruit and crockery rest on polished sideboards as expected, but incongruous Op-art paintings-within-paintings hang above them. Through Nov. 14. (Pierogi, 177 N. 9th St. 718-599-2144.)

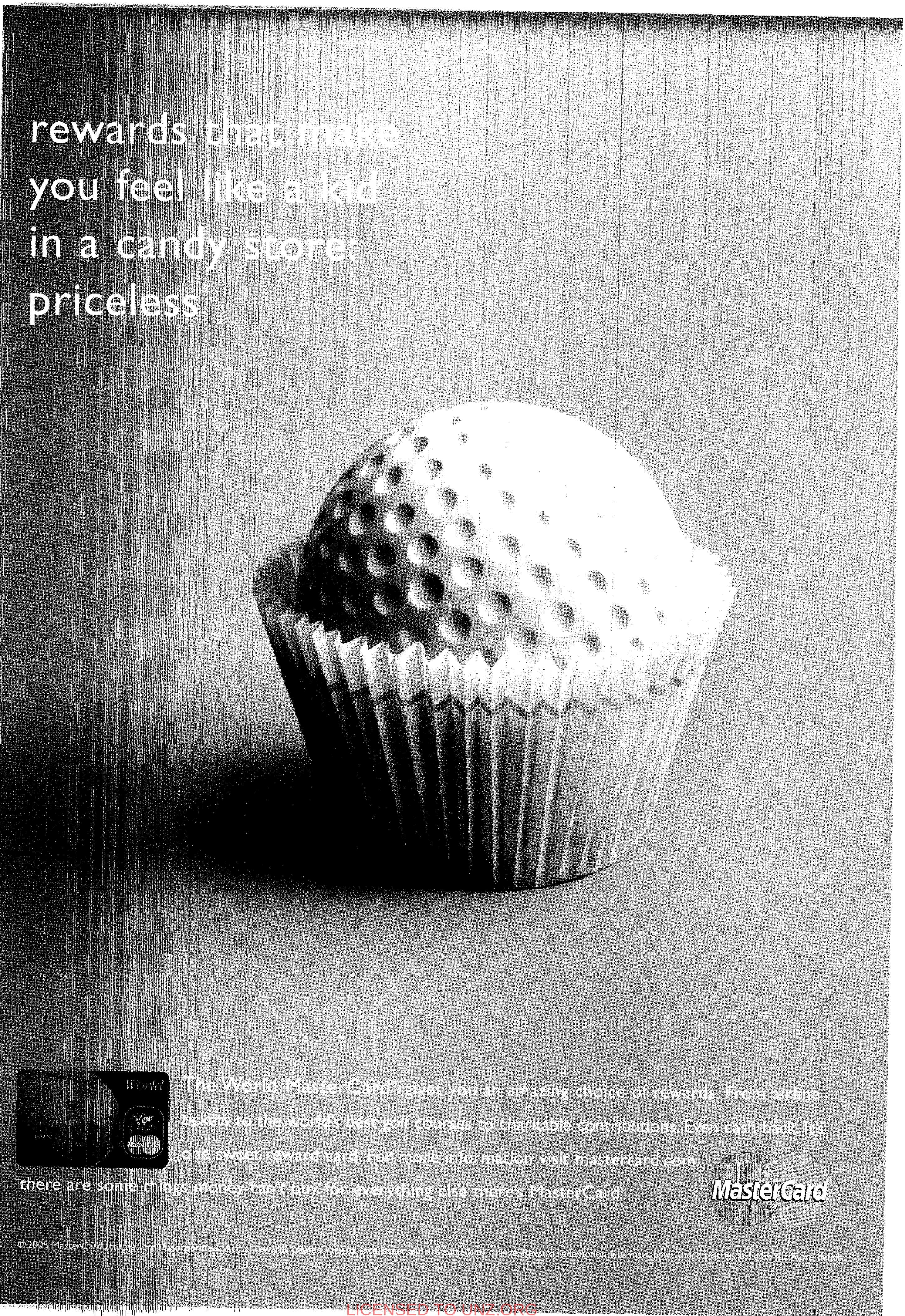
DANCE

GARTH FAGAN
The company's Jazz at Lincoln Center engagement features an opening-night-only revival of its 1991 hit "Griot New York," at which Wynton Marsalis and his septet will play Marsalis's original score live. The troupe's sleek, controlled dancing is offset by a series of oversized sculptures: a utensil that resembles an ancient hoe, a giant upside-down earthenware jug that looks eerily like a human head. On the other nights, repertory works share the bill with the world première of "Life: Dark/Light," set to music that was composed by the jazz violinist Billy Bang after he returned home from Vietnam. Bang plays his score live as the dancers create images of work, war, and redemption. (Rose Theatre, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. Nov. 9 at 7:30, Nov. 10-11 at 8, Nov. 12 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 13 at 2.)

COMPAGNIA ATERBALLETTO
The athletic Italian contemporary troupe follows the fad of reinventing Stravinsky's "Les Noces" with its own gleaming, mechanistic version. The artistic director Mauro Bigonzetti's choreography pits a few dancers against a marching, chair-wielding army, emphasizing the stark shapes of straight arms and knees bent at a right angle. Bigonzetti's "Petrushka," which takes place in a brilliant-hued clothing shop, alternates comfortably between shoppers doing jumping jacks and a pas de deux performed in white cowboy boots. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Nov. 8 and Nov. 10-12 at 7:30.)

"BRIGHT ABYSS"
James Thiérrée is a Frenchman, an acrobat, an avant-garde director, and Charlie Chaplin's grandson—and all four pedigrees shape this movement-theatre spectacle from 2004. The flexible performers of La Compagnie du Hanneton seem to be riding out limbo in an attic filled with curiosities—a junky piano, a trapeze, and a massive wooden spool, on which they crawl as it rolls over a big blue mat. A nostalgic score connects the well-framed scenes, which range from sly vaudeville to quirky mime to freaky contortionism. In the rapid-fire dance sequences, ensemble members bound across the stage like competitors in a pogo race. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Nov. 9-12 at 7:30 and Nov. 13 at 3.)

ANNE TERESA DE KEERSMAEKER
At the start of her solo "Once," De Keersmaeker kicks off her shoes, a casual gesture for a usually austere choreographer. The move alludes to Joan Baez, the often barefoot folksinger whose 1963 album "Joan Baez in Concert, Part 2" provides the soundtrack. De Keersmaeker moves fitfully, mouthing and miming the words like an intense child dancing to a record in her bedroom. When Dylan's "With God on Our Side" comes on, a battle scene from "Birth of a Nation" is projected and the methods of the European postmodernist meet the message of the all-American activist. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Nov. 8-12 at 8 and Nov. 13 at 2.)



rewards that make
you feel like a kid
in a candy store:
priceless

The World MasterCard® gives you an amazing choice of rewards. From airline tickets to the world's best golf courses to charitable contributions. Even cash back. It's one sweet reward card. For more information visit mastercard.com.

there are some things money can't buy. for everything else there's MasterCard.

MasterCard

© 2005 MasterCard International Incorporated. Actual rewards offered vary by card issuer and are subject to change. Reward redemption fees may apply. Check mastercard.com for more details.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LAR LUBOVITCH DANCE COMPANY
In a program of two contrasting works, the veteran choreographer offers a glossy, entertaining blend of ballet and modern, with "Elemental Brubeck," a fizzy bebop suite that recalls Gene Kelly's jazz dances, and "Men's Stories," a flowing sequence of arresting solos, provocative duets, and sharp ensemble work. (Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-279-4200. Nov. 8 and Nov. 10-12 at 8.)

"THE SLEEPING BEAUTY NOTEBOOK"
Donald Byrd's clever conceit—to deconstruct the Petipa classic "Sleeping Beauty" as a series of random sketches from a choreographer's journal—has produced a lively, funny evening with some unexpectedly lovely dances, performed by his Seattle-based company, Spectrum Dance Theatre. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Nov. 9-12 at 7:30.)

CHAMBER DANCE PROJECT
Contemporary ballets, well-trained dancers, intimate venues, and live music constitute this young troupe's winning formula. This season, it premières the duet "And So It Is," by Diane Coburn Bruning, the artistic director, and Victor Quijada's hip-hop-meets-Vivaldi experiment, "I Said No But You Forgot." The company's string quartet alone, led by Christopher C. Lee, is worth the ticket. (Citigroup Theatre, 405 W. 55th St. 212-868-4444. Nov. 10 at 7:30 and Nov. 11-12 at 8.)

REBECCA STENN
In the rising choreographer's striking new evening-length piece, "Blue Print," the mood is autumnal. The dancers might be people walking down the street in fall or leaves picked up by a gust of wind. Three musicians play the plangent string score in the midst of the action while husky recorded voices read lines from T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets." Stenn's organic, expressive movement is poetic in its own right. Sometimes the dancers touch each other's bodies like healers, but there is wrestling, too, and fast, full-out dancing over satisfyingly big spaces. With original music by Jay Weissman, Dave Eggar, and Tom Chiu. (Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, 131 E. 10th St. 212-674-8194. Nov. 10-13 at 8:30.)

COMPANHIA PORTUGUESA DE BAILADO CONTEMPORÂNEO
The Portuguese company's quick, liquid-jointed dancers interpret the songs of the beloved fado singer Amália Rodrigues in "Amaramália Abandono," which was seen last year at the Joyce. Taking his cues from Rodrigues's throaty, yearning voice, the artistic director Vasco Wellenkamp has choreographed hard falls and outstretched arms, concluding with a desperate image of a woman dangling over an upended bench. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Nov. 11 at 8.)

SEOUL PERFORMING ARTS COMPANY
Though the repertory of this Korean folkloric troupe ranges from court dance to earthier shamanic forms, a refined elegance and a studied presentation predominate. The program for this visit includes the masked dance of Ch'oyong, a kaleidoscopic fan dance, a sword dance, a military drill, an abstract crane dance, and a festive improvised dance involving humming. A full harvest festival fills the second act. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-545-7536. Nov. 11 at 8.)

"BLUEPRINT OF A LADY"
The choreographer Ronald K. Brown and the jazz vocalist Nnenna Freelon collaborate in a tribute to Billie Holiday. As Freelon digs in to songs associated with Lady Day, Brown's dancers swirl around her, sometimes engaging her, sometimes not. Freelon's interpretations, shunning imitation, are strong and contemporary, and Brown spools out his usual loose-limbed wonders. But what the two have to do with each other, or with Holiday, is rendered too faintly to read. (New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center St., Newark. 888-466-5722. Nov. 12 at 7:30 and Nov. 13 at 3.)

MALAVIKA SARUKKAI
Widely acknowledged as one of the greatest performers in the South Indian classical dance tradition of bharata natyam, Sarukkai is an artist of perfection. Matching rhythmic precision with a subtle suggestion of emotion and calibrating dynamic contrasts in her meticulous choreography, she brings an old form to vibrant life. She's also stunningly beautiful. Her solo program, "Kala," or "Time," plays with cycles: the seasons, day and night, birth and death, as well as those structuring the music of her accompanists. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-545-7536. Nov. 12 at 8.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Nov. 9 and Nov. 12 at 8: Sonja Frisell's grand production of **"Aida,"** with Hasmik Papian (in the title role), Yvonne Naef, Franco Farina, Mark Delavan, and Paata Burchuladze; James Conlon conducts. ♦ Nov. 10 at 7:30: Elizabeth Futral brings a glittering soprano (and a somewhat predictable, Callas-like sensibility) to the title role of Donizetti's **"Lucia di Lammermoor,"** topping off her performance with an impressively restrained mad scene. Her Edgardo, Giuseppe Filianoti (making his début), has a commanding presence and a silken tone; Edoardo Müller's forceful conducting complements the imposing Gothic mass of Nicolas Joël's production. ♦ Nov. 11 at 8: **"Le Nozze di Figaro,"** Mozart and Da Ponte's crafty sequence of scenes from the class struggle in eighteenth-century Spain, features Hei-Kyung Hong, Lisa Milne, Joyce DiDonato, Peter Mattei, and Luca Pisaroni; Mark Wigglesworth. ♦ Nov. 12 at 1:30 and Nov. 15 at 8: **"La Bohème,"** with Ruth Ann Swenson and Frank Lopardo as Mimì and Rodolfo, and Emily Pulley and Vassily Gerello as Musetta and Marcello; Philippe Auguin. ♦ Nov. 14 at 8: Ramón Vargas and Natalie Dessay, the comeback kid of coloratura, perform the title roles of Gounod's **"Roméo et Juliette,"** in a new production by Guy Joosten; Bertrand de Billy. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Nov. 9 at 7:30 and Nov. 11 at 8: **"Il Barbiere di Siviglia,"** with Jennifer Rivera, Hugh Russell, John Tessier, and Nikolay Didenko; Joseph Rescigno conducts. (These are the final performances.) ♦ Nov. 10 at 7:30: City Opera's production of **"Turandot"** manages to provide abundant spectacle without a lot of expensive clutter. Lori Phillips and Philip Webb are Turandot and Calaf; George Manahan. ♦ Nov. 12 at 1:30 and 8, Nov. 13 at 1:30, and Nov. 15 at 7:30: Rachel Portman, the Oscar-winning composer of lush scores for "Emma" and other films, has written an operatic setting of Saint-Exupéry's **"The Little Prince,"** and City Opera is hosting the New York première; the production is by the formidable Francesca Zambello, with sets and costumes by the late, great Maria Bjørnson. The boy sopranos Graham Phillips and Jeffery Allison alternate in the title role, with Keith Phares as the Pilot; Gerald Steichen. (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500.)

TEATRO GRATTACIELO
Duane Printz's once-a-year company does one thing only, and they do it well—carry a torch for the little masters of the verismo school. This time it's Leoncavallo's **"Zazà,"** with Aprile Millo in the title role, that of a tempestuous Parisian café singer determined not to lose her man. Alfredo Silipigni, an experienced verist, conducts a concert performance. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 12 at 8.)

TABLES FOR TWO

MO PITKIN'S HOUSE OF SATISFACTION

34 Avenue A, between 2nd and 3rd Sts. (212-777-5660)—When you visit a restaurant that features "Judeo-Latino" cuisine and is attached to a performance space that regularly hosts a comedy show called "Chicks and Giggles," it's hard to begrudge a little stunt cooking. Some things turn out fine, like the challah-bread pudding with a thick dulce-de-leche sauce; others have a limited charm, like the deep-fried macaroni and cheese, a brick of crunchy pasta set in a plasticky pool of Velveeta, manchego, and cheddar. Then there's the monstrous Mo Burger, a thick, juicy meat patty, topped by a fried egg and fried onions and sandwiched by two generous smears of chicken liver and a bulky, soft bun. It's a valiant attempt to make sarcasm edible, but too overblown to really enjoy.

Luckily, there's also gimmick-free fare, including excellent straightforward burgers. The potato latkes stick to tradition, arriving with applesauce and sour cream. "They're not my Aunt Debbie's," a diner remarked, "but they're close." A tender pork chop has a root-beer glaze with equal measures of sweet and salt. At times, though, the cooks seem to have lost their taste buds. Sautéed greens were far too garlicky; *chicharrones de pollo*, small, tough, and gristly chunks of chicken, had a fiery fried shell that overwhelmed their avocado salsa. And stuffed cabbage, a dish admittedly difficult to love, was drowned in a bland tomato sauce.

The owners, brothers Phil and Jesse Hartman (who also own the Great Jones Café and the Two Boots pizzerias), obviously have tongue firmly in cheek—the restaurant's name, according to their Web site, is a tribute to "an eccentric cousin who tried to assassinate Hitler," and they serve a Martini called the Manischevetini. (Perhaps the comedian Jimmy Fallon, one of their investors, had a hand in the menu.) The chef, Chris Randell, came from a stint at Dos Caminos, which explains the Latino fusion. The crowds will keep coming for the talent upstairs—performers have included Debbie Harry, Lili Taylor, and Amy Poehler—but one hopes that Mo Pitkin's will give up some of the party tricks and concentrate on the diner standards it does so well. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $8-$22.)

—*Andrea Thompson*

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK
If you think that Rossini only wrote brilliant comedies, then the heroic **"William Tell,"** arguably the first Parisian *grand opéra*, will be a healthy corrective. Eve Queler's concert performance features Marcello Giordani, Marco Chingari, and Angela Maria Blasi. (Carnegie Hall. 212-799-1982. Nov. 13 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

CAMERATA IRELAND
The pianist and conductor Barry Douglas leads this touring ensemble, made up of Irish musicians who play in such groups as the London Symphony and the Hallé Orchestra. They'll play Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto and Seventh Symphony along with music by Penderecki and Kinsella. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Nov. 9 at 8.)

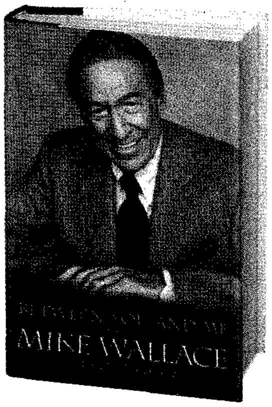
DEBORAH VOIGT, BEN HEPPNER, AND THE ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S
Two glorious vocalists offer performances of music by Beethoven (from "Fidelio"), Weber, and Wagner (from "Tristan und Isolde"); Asher Fisch conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 9 at 8.)

AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA
World premières by José Serebrier ("Symphonie Mystique," with the soprano Carole Farley), Michael Torke, and Edward Bilous (a collaboration with Pilobolus Dance Theatre) are featured in the

ADVERTISEMENT

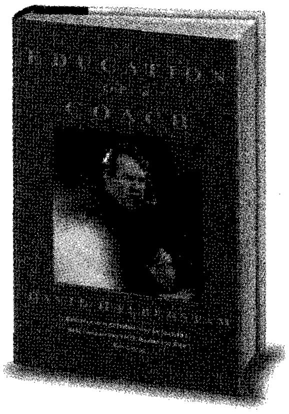
bookmarks

The *New Yorker* Promotion Department invites you to look for these releases.



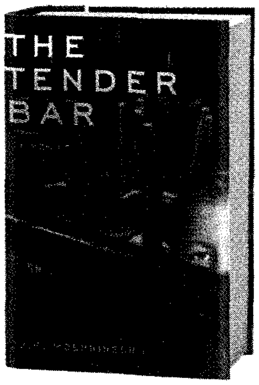
A memoir as insightful and candid as a Mike Wallace interview. Includes a DVD of moments of controversy, wisdom, humor, and insight from Wallace's most famous interviews.

"Here are his own inside stories of his historic interviews ... it is a great read!"
—Walter Cronkite



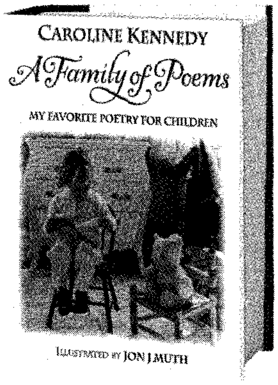
Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Halberstam explores why the New England Patriots' Bill Belichick is the winningest coach in the N.F.L., revealing the strategies and the deep-seated ideals that have helped him create his legacy.

"Belichick to Halberstam may be football's best combination since Montana to Rice."
—Bob Costas



A story about finding yourself in the most unlikely of places, by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist J. R. Moehringer.

"The best memoirist of his kind since Mary Karr wrote 'The Liars' Club.'"
—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*



A priceless collection of children's poetry cherished by the Kennedy family, edited by Caroline Kennedy, with paintings by Jon J Muth.

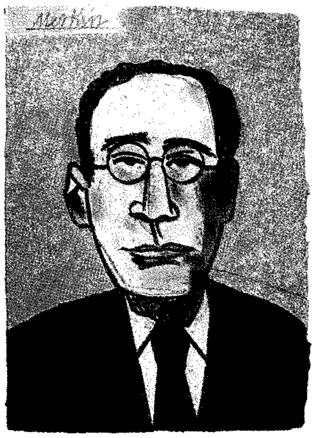
"This volume deserves a permanent—and prominent—place on any family bookshelf."
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

HYPERION

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
ON TRACK

Was there ever a period more conducive to long, flowing tracking shots than feudal Japan, with its extreme formality, its women in kimonos bustling through exquisite forests? Among the masters of the tracking shot—Kenji Mizoguchi, Max Ophuls, and Orson Welles—Mizoguchi is perhaps the most touching as a storyteller. His lyrical camera in "The Life of Oharu" (1952) gives this account of the decline and fall of a well-born Kyoto courtesan a gravity and emotional power unique in the cinema. Mizoguchi (1898-1956) made more than eighty films, and his great subject was women—their love affairs, their generosity, their martyrdom in a society dominated by men. The Brooklyn Academy of Music will be showing a selection of Mizoguchi's masterpieces through Nov. 22, including "Oharu," "The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum," and "Sansho the Bailiff," about the trials of an eleventh-century mother and her children as they try to rejoin a nobleman cast into exile.

—David Denby



orchestra's new program; Steven Sloane conducts. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 11 at 7:30.)

BRUCKNER ORCHESTRA LINZ
Dennis Russell Davies, a determined advocate of contemporary music, leads his Austrian ensemble in two Viennese Romantic masterworks, Korngold's Violin Concerto (with Renaud Capuçon) and the original version of Bruckner's Symphony No. 8. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 13 at 3.)

THE ENGLISH CONCERT
Andrew Manze, the Baroque world's superstar violinist, leads this sparkling group; he has also helped revive interest in the music of Heinrich Biber, which he will play in a concert that also includes reconstructed versions of Bach's Orchestral Suites Nos. 2-3. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 14 at 7:30.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA
James Conlon conducts a tart program of Britten (the Piano Concerto and the "Four Sea Interludes" from "Peter Grimes") and Stravinsky (the Violin Concerto) featuring student soloists. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 14 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-769-7406.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Christoph Eschenbach leads his magnificent ensemble in Mahler's Symphony No. 6 in A Minor. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 15 at 8.)

RECITALS

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Nov. 9 at 7:30: Two apples of Lincoln Center's eye—the up-and-coming pianist Jonathan Biss and the Borromeo String Quartet—offer an elegant and exacting program of Schumann (the Piano Quintet), Stravinsky, and Schoenberg (the Quartet No. 1 in D Minor, a grand farewell to Romanticism). ♦ Nov. 11 at 8 and Nov. 13 at 5: Exceptionally rare songs by Franz Xaver Mozart, who composed at the dawn of the Romantic era but under the very deep shadow of his father, highlight a recital by the soprano Barbara Bonney, who joins the pianist Margo Garrett and a crew of promising young singers; songs by Leopold and Wolfgang Amadeus are also featured. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788.)

LEILA JOSEFOWICZ
The young violinist, who combines the heritage of her solid Curtis Institute training with an adventurous spirit, performs sonatas by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 96) and Ravel along with works by Messiaen and Salonen. (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 10 at 7:30.)

"INTERPRETATIONS" SERIES: EARL HOWARD / SONU
The invaluable contemporary-music-and-multimedia series at Merkin Concert Hall continues with a split program offered by the noted electronic-music composer and saxophonist and by a new group of composer-performers from Southern California. (129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Nov. 10 at 8.)

SALZBURG MARIONETTE THEATRE: "DON GIOVANNI"
Long before Basil Twist arrived on the scene, these Salzburgers mastered the art of artificial-movement theatre. A performance of Mozart's tragicomedy, complete with two-foot-tall puppets and elaborate sets, leads off a series at the Metropolitan Museum, with further shows for both adults and children (of "The Magic Flute," "Hansel and Gretel," and Mendelssohn's "A Midsummer Night's Dream") to follow. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Nov. 10 at 8. For full listings, see www.metmuseum.org.)

BARGEMUSIC
In one of the barge's most prestigious concerts of the year, the eminent pianist Claude Frank joins two intense younger players—the violinist Andy Simionescu and the cellist Matt Haimovitz—in a program of music by Kodály, Beethoven (the Piano Sonata in A-Flat Major, Op. 110), and Dvořák (the Piano Trio in F Minor, Op. 65). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. Nov. 12 at 7:30. For full listings, see www.bargemusic.org.)

MILLER THEATRE: LIGETI FESTIVAL
George Steel's maverick series devoted to the Hungarian late modernist continues, with Miller's fiddle favorite, Jennifer Koh, tackling the Ligeti Violin Concerto (flaunting a new cadenza by John Zorn) while accompanied by Timothy Weiss's Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble; the group adds a short survey of Ligeti scores that includes "Ramifications," for thirteen strings, a nineteen-sixties microtonal manifesto. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Nov. 12 at 8.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG: "TEATROS ESPAÑOLES"
The full-throated melodies of zarzuela—operetta with a fiery Latin twist—will be celebrated in the festival's latest program, with theatrical songs by Guerrero, Piazzolla, Granados, and Lecuona sung by Dina Kuznetsova, Adriana Zabala, Jeffrey Picón, and Ricardo Herrera; Steven Blier is the pianist and compère. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Nov. 15-16 at 8.)

MOVIES OPENING

BEE SEASON
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 11. (In wide release.)

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE
Mark Bamford directed this romantic drama, about the lives of several socially diverse people who converge at an animal shelter in Cape Town, South Africa. Opening Nov. 11. (Angelika Film Center and 62nd & Broadway.)

DERAILED
An affair between a Manhattan adman (Clive Owen) and a younger woman (Jennifer Aniston) leads to blackmail that threatens to ruin his life. Directed by Mikael Håfström. Opening Nov. 11. (In wide release.)

ELLIE PARKER
Naomi Watts stars in this comedy as an aspiring actress in Hollywood. With Chevy Chase as her manager. Written and directed by Scott Coffey. Opening Nov. 11. (Angelika Film Center.)

GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN'
Jim Sheridan directed this drama, about a drug dealer who tries to make it as a rapper. With 50 Cent and Terrence Howard. Opening Nov. 9. (In wide release.)

GOOD MORNING, NIGHT
A drama set in the late seventies, about a woman involved in the Red Brigade, an Italian terrorist group plotting to kidnap and execute a high-ranking politician. Directed by Marco Bellocchio. In Italian. Opening Nov. 11. (Cinema Village.)

PRIDE & PREJUDICE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 11. (In wide release.)

PULSE
Kiyoshi Kurosawa directed this horror film, in which Internet users are mysteriously driven to suicide. In Japanese. Opening Nov. 9. (IFC Center.)

SARAH SILVERMAN . . . JESUS IS MAGIC
An adaptation of Silverman's comedy act, with footage of her show interwoven with musical numbers and backstage material. Opening Nov. 11. (Empire 25 and Union Square.)

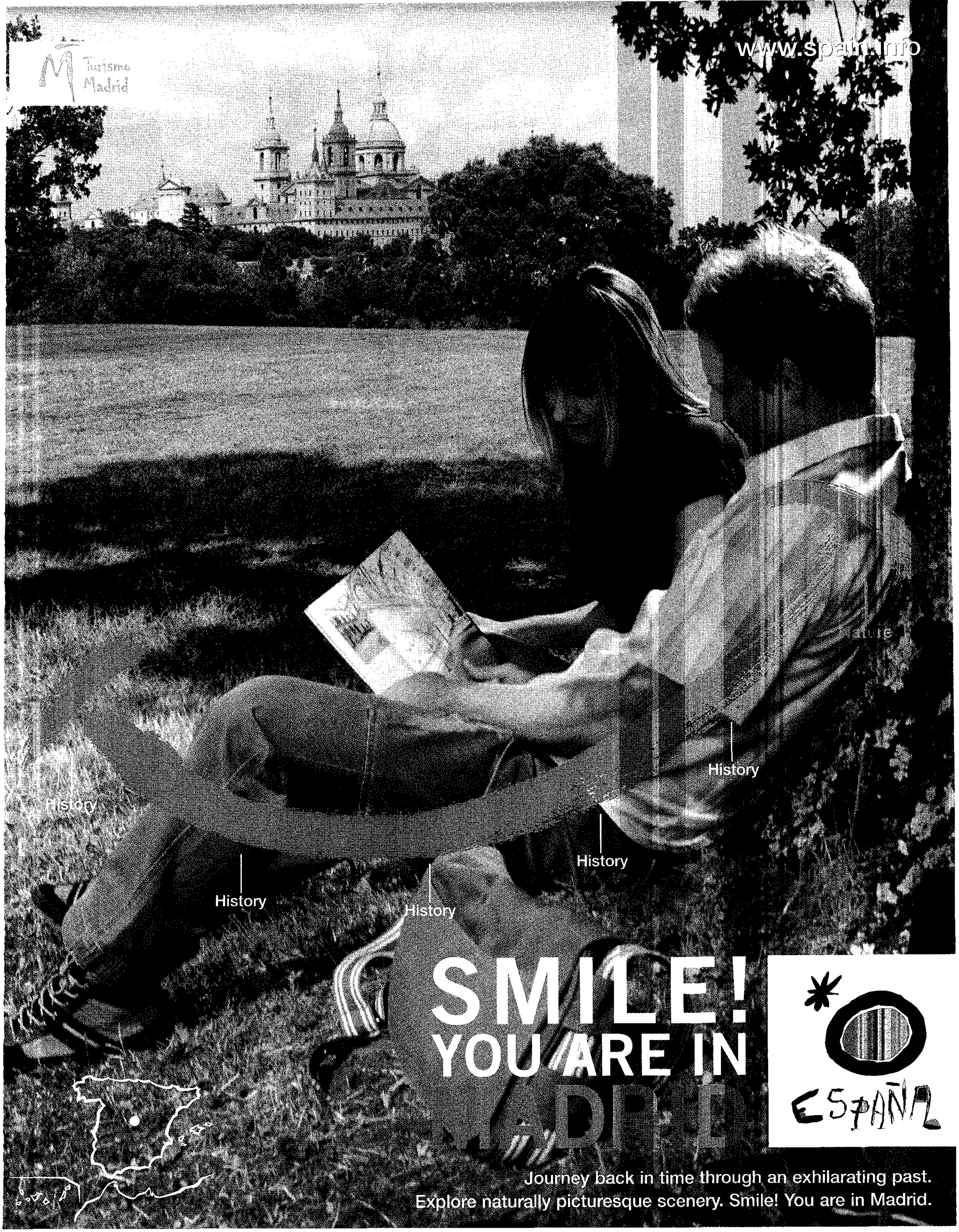
THE SWENKAS
A documentary about Zulu men in Johannesburg, South Africa, who get dressed to the nines and fox-trot for judges, a pastime called "swenking." Directed by Jeppe Rønde. In English and Zulu. Opening Nov. 9. (Film Forum.)

ZATHURA
Jon Favreau directed this children's movie, in which two brothers are sent into space by an old video game in their basement. Based on a book by Chris Van Allsburg. With Tim Robbins. Opening Nov. 11. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

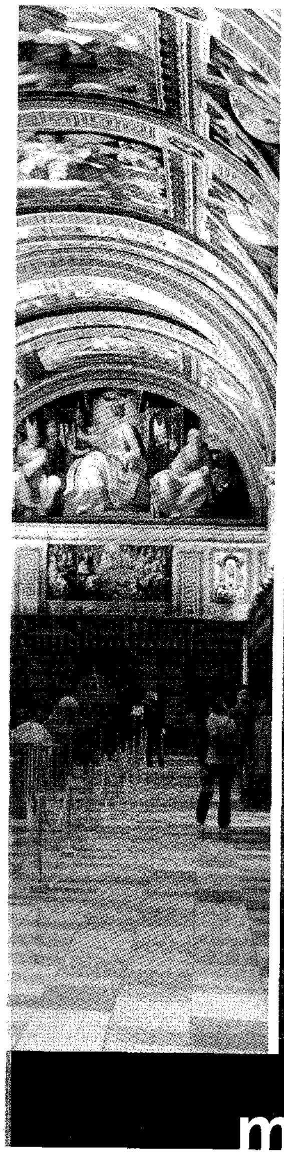
BALLETS RUSSES
The legendary company, founded in Paris in 1909, used designs and costumes by the likes of Dali, Picasso, and Matisse. It split into two competing

RICHARD MERKIN


Turismo Madrid
www.spain.info
History
History
History
History
History
SMILE!
YOU ARE IN
MADRID
España
Journey back in time through an exhilarating past.
Explore naturally picturesque scenery. Smile! You are in Madrid.

TOURIST OFFICES OF SPAIN

Water Tower Place, suite 915 East 845, North Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL 60-611 Tel. 1.312.642.1992 Fax: 1.312.642.9817 e-mail: chicago@tourspain.es
8383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 960 Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Tel: 1.323.658.7188 Fax: 1.323.658.1061 e-mail: losangeles@tourspain.es
1395 Brickell Avenue, suite 1130 Miami, FL 33131 Tel: 1.305.358.1992 Fax: 1.305.358.8223 e-mail: miami@tourspain.es
666, Fifth Avenue, 35th floor New York, NY 10103 Tel: 1.212.265.8822 Fax: 1.212.265.8864 e-mail: nuevayork@tourspain.es www.okspain.org



monument
to the Golden Age

Spain's sixteenth and seventeenth century Golden Age began during one of history's most powerful monarchies, that of Felipe II (1556–98). From the paintings of Velázquez and El Greco to Cervantes' "Don Quixote" to the poetry of Fray Luis de Leon, this was a period of magnificent artistic and political achievement.

Another product of this era, the **Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial**, about thirty miles from Madrid on the slopes of the Sierra de Guadarrama, is an architectural triumph reinforced by its UNESCO World Heritage site honor. Dating back to 1563, the massive granite palace complex was built over a period of two decades following designs by Juan Batista de Toledo (assistant to Michelangelo at St. Peter's Basilica) and later, Juan de Herrera. The scale of El Escorial is staggering, its grid-like design covers 323,000 square feet including nine towers, thirteen oratories, eighty-eight fountains, and more than two thousand windows.

The monastery itself was built to commemorate Spain and England's victory over the French at the Battle of St. Quentin in 1577. Inside the basilica a magnificent white marble Christ by Benvenuto Cellini shares the final resting place of numerous Spanish monarchs, including Felipe II and his father. The collections at El Escorial are remarkable. The library, featuring a vaulted ceiling with frescoes by Pellegrino Tibaldi, houses more than fifty-thousand rare works, including numerous manuscripts and codices in Arab and Hebrew. The El Escorial complex is open from April to late September. ■

PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: KEN WELSH / ALAMY; TURESPAÑA

Visit **OKSPAIN.ORG** and **SPAIN.INFO** when planning your trip to Spain.

troupes, both of which toured the world, and brought classical dance to small-town America. The filmmakers Daniel Geller and Dayna Goldfine blend performance footage stretching back to the nineteen-thirties with recent interviews with surviving members—all of them sharp, spry, and funny. The retired dancers relate their triumphs and trials, describe the politics and personalities, and deliver some technical insights as well as plenty of backstage gossip. It's a rich, lovely history lesson, although it plays more like a PBS documentary than a truly exceptional moviegoing experience.—*Ken Marks* (Film Forum.)

CAPOTE

How could Truman Capote, with his high, thin, goose-quill voice and his floating palms, possibly have gained the trust of the straightforward men and women of Holcomb, Kansas, when he went there for this magazine in 1959 to investigate the pointless slaughter of four members of the Clutter family—the murders that became the subject of Capote's masterpiece, "In Cold Blood"? The writer Dan Futterman and the director Bennett Miller tell us how, and the wonderful Philip Seymour Hoffman first captures Capote physically and then works inward to the vulnerable yet rotting soul. When Capote gets a look at one of the murderers, Perry Smith (Clifton Collins, Jr.), the focus of the movie becomes the intimate, artistically necessary but morally questionable relation between artist and felon. With Catherine Keener as the novelist Harper Lee; Mark Pellegrino as Perry's partner, Dick Hickock; and Bob Balaban as the *New Yorker* editor William Shawn, who is pictured, bizarrely, as hungry for the bloody details of the crime.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/10/05.) (In wide release.)

GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK

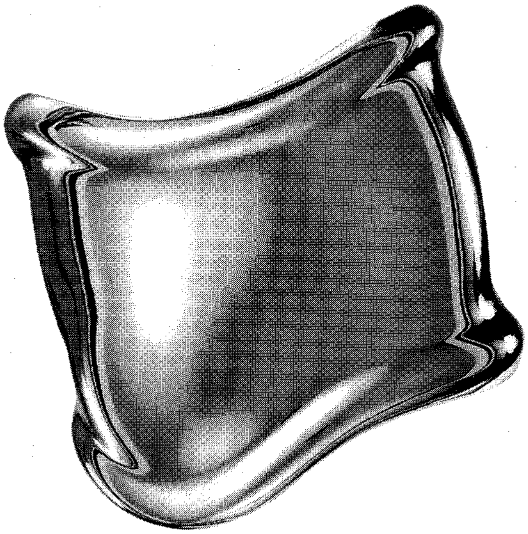
George Clooney's nifty account of Edward R. Murrow's historic prime-time assaults on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, in 1954, imitates many of Murrow's best qualities—it's swift, elegant, grimly humorous, and effective. David Strathairn gets the suavely streamlined Murrow perfectly—the pomaded jet-black hair, the thick brows and unblinking eyes, the curt, rhyming syntax and firm emphasis. Clooney's most serious intention appears to be to deliver a blow to the patella of a somnolent American press that, until recently, has indulged the Bush Administration's most extravagant smears and lies. He has completely succeeded. With Clooney himself as Murrow's partner, Fred Friendly, and Frank Langella as the CBS chairman William S. Paley. Robert Elswit did the black-and-white cinematography, which matches kinescopes of McCarthy's actual speeches.—*D.D.* (10/10/05) (In wide release.)

JARHEAD

An ambiguous and unsatisfying celebration of a barbarian warrior caste. Initially, the director, Sam Mendes, and the writer, William Broyles, Jr., adapting Anthony Swofford's 2003 memoir about the Marines in the first Gulf War, seem to have made the latest version of a traditional American narrative: a young man enters the military, undergoes bewildering ordeals, ships off to war, and finds out who he is. The hero, Swofford himself (Jake Gyllenhaal), gets pounded by officers, first by a drill instructor and then by the sergeant (Jamie Foxx) who heads his special Marine unit, and hazed by his buddies. Muscled and primed, the Marines arrive in Saudi Arabia in the fall of 1990—and wait in the desert. As the coalition forces slowly build up, the men train, horse around, and think obsessively about their girlfriends at home. But they never do get into the war, except peripherally, and, since the question of courage and character is left up in the air, we wonder, in the end, why the material wasn't played more ironically, or for laughs. Mendes and the cinematographer, Roger Deakins, produce some astonishing scenes—soldiers seemingly turning into sand crabs, oil fires at night—but without the test of combat the men come off as infantile and self-pitying. With Peter Sarsgaard.—*D.D.* (11/7/05) (In wide release.)

KISS KISS, BANG BANG

Robert Downey, Jr., plays Harry Lockhart, a New York thief who stumbles into a movie audition and winds up in L.A., where the preparation for his screen test is aided by a private detective known as Gay Perry (Val Kilmer). For good measure, Harry bumps into an old friend, Harmony (Michelle Monaghan),



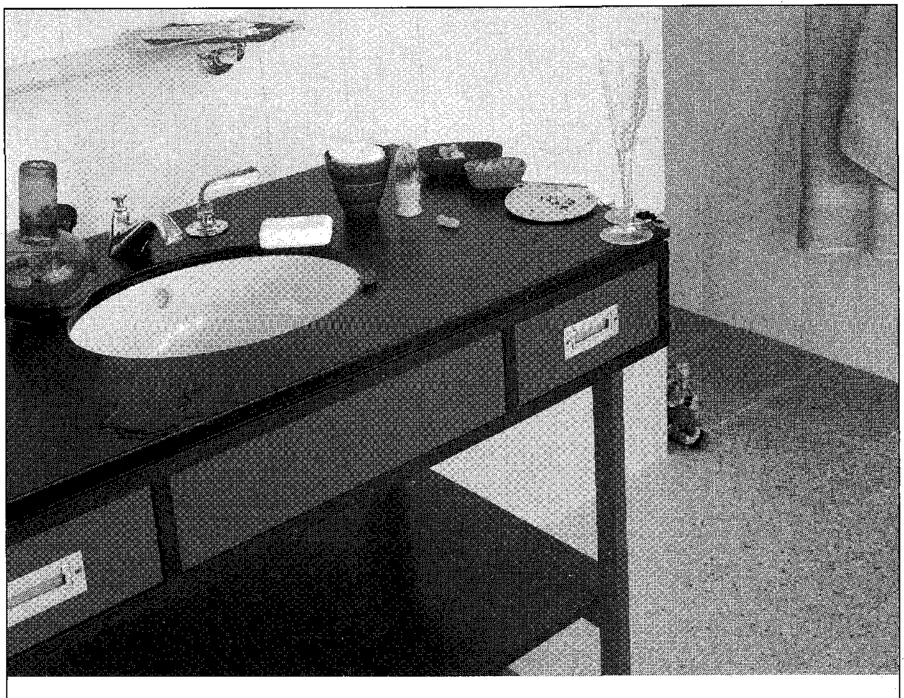
©T&CO. 2005. DESIGNS ©ELSA PERETTI

Elsa Peretti

Elsa Peretti® Bone cuff
in sterling silver, $495.

TIFFANY & CO.

800 526 0649 | TIFFANY.COM



WATERWORKS

Waterworks introduces fine furniture for the bath.
The Legion Watertable. Practical, functional, simple.

800 899 6757 waterworks.com

from his Indiana days. At this point, needless to say, real bodies start to accrue, and real—if comically untroubling—crimes demand to be solved. The writer and director, Shane Black, wants both to reanimate and to mock the devices of pulp, from Raymond Chandler downward; such knowingness occupies him so intensely that, by the end, he is falling over himself trying to tie up the threads of plot, none of which mattered in the first place. The result should be painful to behold, yet somehow it comes off; all three leads, especially Downey, get high on the fizz of the project, and the fussy, needful patter between him and Kilmer feels like it could rattle on forever.—*Anthony Lane* (10/31/05) (In wide release.)

NORTH COUNTRY
The director Niki Caro, who caused a stir with "Whale Rider," has shifted her gaze from her native New Zealand to the iron mines of Minnesota, a more forbidding prospect altogether. It is there that Josey (Charlize Theron) comes to make a new start, bringing her two children from a bruised marriage. With the encouragement of her friend Glory (Frances McDormand), Josey takes a job at the mines, runs head first into the brutish scorn of the male workers, and determines to do something about it. On paper, Caro's film sounds worthy to the point of glumness, and viewers digging for humor will find little cheer; as was the case, though, with campaigning pictures like "Silkwood" and "Norma Rae," any fears that the story will slacken or slump are dispelled by the drive of the performances. Theron's anger is all too credible, and she is backed by such formidable team players as Sissy Spacek and Richard Jenkins, in the role of Josey's parents, and Michelle Monaghan, who plays her young, despairing colleague.—*A.L.* (10/31/05) (In wide release.)

PARADISE NOW
In the West Bank city of Nablus, two seemingly ordinary young Palestinians, Saïd (Kais Nashef) and Khaled (Ali Suliman), turn out to be potential suicide bombers. One of them, it turns out, is a fanatic; the other has rational doubts. A provocative idea, but Hany Abu-Assad's film is missing some connective tissue and a greater context for the men's actions. The most satisfying element in the film is the actual settings—the crumbling and blasted stones of Nablus, and, when the men get to Tel Aviv, the sumptuous glitter of a wealthy modern city. With Lubna Azabal as a vibrant young woman who is sick of violence. In Arabic.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

PRIME
Meryl Streep gives one of her wittiest performances in Ben Younger's comedy about a middle-aged Jewish hausfrau-therapist from the Upper West Side who discovers that a longtime patient, a thirty-seven-year-old divorcée (Uma Thurman), is dating the therapist's handsome twenty-three-year-old son (Bryan Greenberg). Streep fidgets and rotates her neck and rolls her eyes—it's the broadest work she's ever done. The movie, which shifts from comedy to bittersweet ruefulness, is a little on the tepid side, but it plays easily enough, and Thurman, long and slinky, with golden skin, is irresistible as a woman in love.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

SAW II
The psychopath known as Jigsaw is back with a new batch of merciless death traps to ensnare his ever-panicking victims. Directed and co-written by Darren Lynn Bousman, the sequel to last year's hit beefs up the mad killer's role to good effect, and the story of a kidnapped group of not so innocent characters trapped in a Rube Goldberg house of horror is as nasty and thoroughly unpleasant as the original (a classic of the genre). The film doesn't run as efficiently as a Freddy Krueger vehicle—there's a shortage of ghoulish humor—but it's demented and filled with grisly frights.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

SHOPGIRL
Standing behind a glove counter at Saks in Los Angeles, Claire Danes has an expectant but unfocussed air about her—she's like an enigmatic figure in a painted portrait. In this adaptation of Steve Martin's novella from 2000, the director Anand Tucker lovingly photographs the angular, big-boned Danes in a variety of graceful poses, dressed and undressed. Danes is an appealing woman, but moviegoers may find themselves baffled as to why she must choose between the ferrety Jason Schwartzman and Martin himself, in an inert performance as an aging Lothario who can't give her the love that she needs. The movie offers high-style sets and elegantly blended colors to frame what turns out to be an under-written and under-dramatized story. Written by Martin.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

THE SQUID AND THE WHALE
The time is 1986, in Brooklyn's idyllic Park Slope, and a family is breaking up. The dad, Bernard (Jeff Daniels), a college literature teacher and an increasingly unsuccessful novelist, has become a sour and selfish liar; the mom, Joan (Laura Linney), can't stop leaving evidence of her love affairs around the house. Trying to hold on to their love for their parents, their two boys fall into increasingly nutty imitative behavior. Walt (Jesse Eisenberg), sixteen, parrots every one of his dad's huffy opinions; Frank (Owen Kline), a twelve-year-old in a sexual uproar, imitates his mom's indiscretions by rubbing his crotch against library shelves and leaving deposits on schoolbooks and lockers. The movie is a satirical comedy—ruthless and heartbreaking—but a comedy nonetheless; the writer-director Noah Baumbach has captured the way educated parents project their self-love and their career anxieties onto bright children, and the way kids respond to the currents of parental misconduct like pilot fish shimmying around a wayward shark. Baumbach's touch is light, sure, devastating. With Anna Paquin as a creative-writing-student hustler and William Baldwin as a sexually available tennis pro.—*D.D.* (10/24/05) (In wide release.)

SUNSET BOULEVARD
A young scriptwriter (William Holden), speeding away from the finance-company men who have come to repossess his car (it is Los Angeles, where a man can get along without his honor, but not without his car), turns into a driveway on Sunset Boulevard and finds himself at the decaying mansion of the once great silent star Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson). Attended by her butler (Erich von Stroheim), who was once her husband and her director, she lives among the mementos of her past and plots her comeback in her own adaptation of "Salome." The rapacious old vamp persuades the young man to stay and work with her on the script; he becomes her kept man, her lover, her victim. The details are baroque: the rats in the empty swimming pool, the wind moaning in the organ pipes, the midnight burial of a pet chimpanzee. Glint-eyed Swanson clutches at her comeback role almost as if it were Salome, yet the acting honors belong to Holden. When he makes love to the crazy, demanding old woman, his face shows a mixture of pity and guilt and nausea. This brittle satiric tribute to Hollywood's leopard-skin past—it's narrated by a corpse—is almost too clever, yet it's at its best in this cleverness, and is slightly banal in the sequences dealing with a normal girl (Nancy Olson) and modern Hollywood. Billy Wilder directed; Charles Brackett produced; the script is by Brackett, Wilder, and D. M. Marshman, Jr. Released in 1950.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 11 and Nov. 13.)

WALLACE & GROMIT:
THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT
After their triumphant appearances in short films such as "The Wrong Trousers," Wallace and Gromit—respectively, a pale plasticine man and his clever plasticine dog, created by the British animator Nick Park—have at last been honored with a full-length film of their own. The agelessly English town where our heroes live falls prey to a giant rabbit, which plows through the carrots and lettuces that are lovingly cultivated by the populace. The hunt for the pest accelerates toward the kind of climactic chase that Park fans—not far removed from the thrill-tipsy audiences who crowded into early silent comedies—have come to expect. If anything, the new film is slightly too frantic for its own good, affording Wallace and his long-suffering mutt precious little opportunity to hang out in their enviable home. But the strange blend of the domestic and the futuristic pioneered by Park remains intact, and devotees will be relieved to see, as always, the thumb marks in the plasticine; these figures have their own complete existence, yet they were wrought by human hand. With voices by Peter Sallis, Ralph Fiennes, and Helena Bonham Carter.—*A.L.* (10/17/05) (In wide release.)

POP NOTES
SINGLES GOING STEADY

The Bay Area punk band Green Day continues to soldier on, with surprising results. Green Day became a favorite with teen-agers in 1994 with "Dookie," an album of tuneful, mildly aggressive commercial punk accompanied by an omnipresent video on MTV of the singer and guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong jumping up and down on a couch. Green Day's star faded slightly, but just as they were becoming a nineties footnote they released their most political record, "American Idiot," in 2004, and found a new generation of teen-agers ready to pump their fists and wear eyeliner. But it's not Armstrong's simple, passionate politics that have converted consumers—it's his simple, oversized melodies. The group's current hit, **"Wake Me Up When September Ends,"** is the kind of thing Oasis made their name with—a scenery-chewing rock ballad, evocative of ten other bands at once and completely impossible to not sing, given some downtime and an idle mind. The sense of regret in the lyrics has something to do with the academic calendar, maybe, but the arc of the melody is anything but vague. Billie Joe will be happy to stand in for the Gallagher brothers (who were themselves standing in for Lennon and McCartney) until further notice.

In 2003, when she was just nineteen years old, Miranda Lambert finished third on "Nashville Star," the country-music version of "American Idol," and was subsequently signed to Sony Records. Her long blond hair and Playmate looks may have helped make her first album this year's biggest-selling solo country début, but she's no novelty—the title track, **"Kerosene,"** is one of the year's best songs. Lambert wrote it herself, an anomaly in Nashville. It's anomalous in structure, too, closer to rock in its repetitive form: one nagging guitar figure and pounding drums relieved every eight bars by a three-chord turnaround. Lambert has a strong twang, but she's not a belter like last year's rookie sensation Gretchen Wilson—she lets her verses cruise. The lyrics find Lambert "giving up on love, 'cause love's given up on me," but she saves the implicit violence of the title for an entire class: "Forget your high society, I'm soakin' it in kerosene." Music historians will note a harmonica quoting the Monkees' "I'm a Believer," a song from another act that first got famous on TV. And if TV stays its current course, maybe the Lamberts will follow the Osbournes and the Lachey-Simpsons into stardom. There are at least a few good episodes, no doubt, in Miranda's parents, Bev and Rick—they run a private-detective agency, and Rick worked as an undercover narcotics cop for the Dallas police in the late seventies while playing with a country-rock group called Contraband.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

IMPORTED
BOMBAY
SAPPHIRE
Distilled
LONDON
DRY GIN
Distilled from 100%
Grain Neutral Spirits
"DOUBLE MARTINI"
by YVES BEHAR
BOMBAY SAPPHIRE
INSPIRED

BE BRILLIANT AND INSPIRED. DRINK RESPONSIBLY. WWW.BOMBAYSAPPHIRE.COM BOMBAY SAPPHIRE AND SAPPHIRE ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS. ©2004 THE BOMBAY SPIRITS COMPANY U.S.A., MIAMI, [illegible] VOL (94 PROOF)

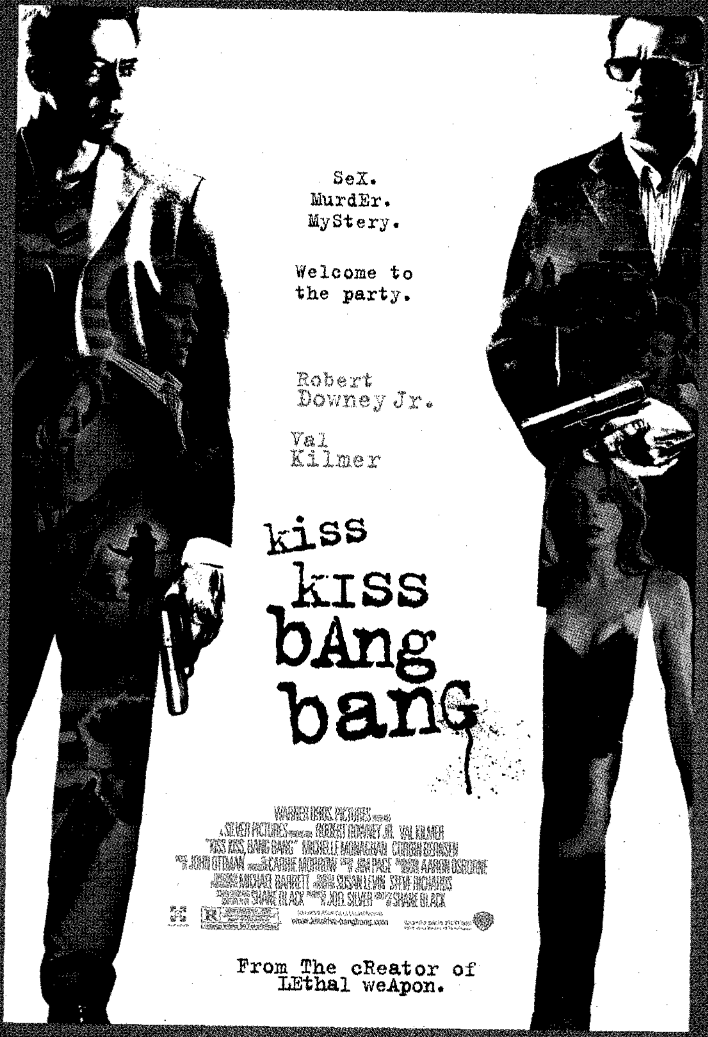
ADVERTISEMENT

BOMBAY SAPPHIRE®

PRESENTS

INSPIRED VISIONS

BOMBAY SAPPHIRE has a recipe for a perfect night at the movies: mix five parts inspiration with one part innovation and add a generous dash of passion. And the one place where all these ingredients come together is in film. With fresh perspectives and a personal touch, today's visionary filmmakers are bringing new excitement to the screen.


SeX.
MurdEr.
MyStery.
Welcome to
the party.
Robert
Downey Jr.
Val
Kilmer
kiss
kiss
bAng
bang
WARNER BROS. PICTURES
From The cReator of
LEthal weApon.

In Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang, a breezy take on writer-director Shane Black's trademark buddy action/comedy oeuvre, a petty thief (Robert Downey Jr.) is brought to Los Angeles for an unlikely audition and finds himself in the middle of a murder investigation, along with his high school dream girl (Michelle Monaghan) and a detective (Val Kilmer) who has been training him for his upcoming role. Presented by Warner Bros. Pictures.

Opens Nationwide November 11th.

WARNER BROS. PICTURES

BOMBAY SAPPHIRE®
INSPIRED

BE BRILLIANT AND INSPIRED. DRINK RESPONSIBLY!
WWW.BOMBAYSAPPHIRE.COM. BOMBAY SAPPHIRE AND SAPPHIRE ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS.
© 2005 THE BOMBAY SPIRITS COMPANY U.S.A., MIAMI, FL. GIN 47% ALC/VOL. (94 PROOF)

THE WEATHER MAN
Chicago midwinter melancholia, rendered in shades of blue and gray. The ice on the lake cracks and shifts, the freezing rain comes down like acid, and David Spritz (Nicolas Cage), the fatuously likable weatherman for a local TV station, gestures in front of a blank screen. Dave can't get the weather right—it's all shifting winds, he says in despair. His life is all shifting winds, too. A forty-year-old child, he feels abashed every time he comes into contact with his father, Robert Spritzel (Michael Caine), a well-known writer whose self-assurance is crushing; Dave's wife (Hope Davis) is leaving him; and his kids are running into trouble. The tone is depressive—even the jokes have a sorry air about them. But the director, Gore Verbinski, and the writer, Steven Conrad, stuck to their conception that the material should play as a belated coming-of-age movie, and the movie has some grit. In all, it's one of those doomed projects that inspires respect.—*D.D.* (11/7/05) (In wide release.)

A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE
The writer-director, John Cassavetes, presents his morose yet romantic view of mental disorder, with Gena Rowlands as the helpless victim of a bullying blue-collar husband (Peter Falk) and a repressive society. She's a frantic, wilted Los Angeles housewife who is endowed with a clarity of vision that the warped society can't tolerate, and so she's persecuted. The scenes are often unshaped, and so rudderless that the meanings don't emerge. Rowlands externalizes schizophrenic dissolution; she fragments before our eyes. But her prodigious performance is enough for half a dozen tours de force—it's exhausting. Released in 1974.—*P.K.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Nov. 10.)

Also Playing

CHICKEN LITTLE: In wide release. **THE DYING GAUL:** In wide release. **A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE:** In wide release. **IN HER SHOES:** In wide release (10/17/05). **NEW YORK DOLL:** Angelika Film Center. **THE PASSENGER:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema. **PROTOCOLS OF ZION:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Theatrical première. Nov. 10-11 and Nov. 14-15 at 7 and 9 and Nov. 12-13 at 5 and 7: "Shooting Magpies" (2005, Amber Collective). ♦ "Goethe-Institut New York Presents." Nov. 10 at 8: "La Habanera" (1937, Douglas Sirk; in German). ♦ "Performa05." Nov. 11 at 8: "Videos: 1979 to Now" (Michael Smith). ♦ Nov. 12 at 8: "Personal Archive: Michael Smith and Jay Sanders." ♦ "Essential Cinema." Nov. 12 at 6: "The Eleventh Year" (1928, Dziga Vertov; silent). ♦ Special screening. Nov. 13 at 5:30 and 8: "India Song" (1975, Marguerite Duras; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"Cinemachat with Elliott Stein." Nov. 9 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Sons and Lovers" (1960, Jack Cardiff). ♦ Through Nov. 20: "Gena Rowlands: An Independent Spirit." Nov. 10 at 7:30: "A Woman Under the Influence" (†), followed by a Q. & A. with Gena Rowlands moderated by Peter Bogdanovich. ♦ Nov. 11 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Gloria" (1980, John Cassavetes). ♦ Nov. 12 at 3, 6, and 9: "Opening Night" (1977, Cassavetes). A Q. & A. with Rowlands follows the 6 P.M. screening. ♦ Nov. 13 at 3, 6, and 9: "Minnie and Moskowitz" (1971, Cassavetes). ♦ Through Nov. 22: "A Moving Camera: Kenji Mizoguchi." Nov. 14 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Sisters of the Gion" (1936; in Japanese). ♦ Nov. 15 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Sansho the Bailiff" (1954; in Japanese).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through Nov. 17: "Naruse: The Unknown Japanese Master," the films of Mikio Naruse. All films are in Japanese. Nov. 9 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "Mother" (1952). ♦ Nov. 10 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "Yearning" (1964). ♦ Nov. 11-12 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "Sound of the Mountain" (1954). ♦ Nov. 13 at 1:30, 5:20, 7:20, and 9:20 and Nov. 14 at 1:30 and 3:30: "Repast" (1951). ♦ Nov. 13 at 3:30: "Lightning" (1952). ♦ Nov. 14 at 6 and 9:30: "Three Girls with Maiden Hearts" (1935). ♦ Nov. 14 at 7:40: "Street Without End" (1934). ♦ Nov. 15 at 1:10, 5:10, and 9:10: "The Whole Family Works" (1939). ♦ Nov. 15 at 3:20 and 7:20: "Tsuruhachi and Tsurujiro" (1938).

Jeppe Rønde's documentary "The Swenkas" opens Nov. 9.

ZOHAR LAZAR

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Cinéma Tuesdays." Nov. 15 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "Jean de Florette" (1986, Claude Berri; in French).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Weekend Classics." Nov. 11-13 at noon: "The Last Metro" (1980, François Truffaut; in French and German). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Nov. 11-12: "Abba: The Movie" (1977, Lasse Hallström; in English and Swedish). ♦ "Stranger Than Fiction," a documentary series. Nov. 15 at 7:30: "Marjoe" (1972, Howard Smith and Sarah Kernochan).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Through Nov. 23: The films of Isabelle Huppert. All films are in French, except where noted. Nov. 9 at 6 and Nov. 11 at 8:15: "Amateur" (1994, Hal Hartley; in English). ♦ Nov. 9 at 8 and Nov. 14 at 8:30: "Malina" (1991, Werner Schroeter; in German). ♦ Nov. 10 at 6: "Clean Slate" (1981, Bertrand Tavernier). ♦ Nov. 10 at 8:30: "Cactus" (1986, Paul Cox; in English). ♦ Nov. 11 at 6 and Nov. 12 at 6:30: "The Heiresses" (1980, Márta Mészáros; in Hungarian). ♦ Nov. 12 at 1 and Nov. 13 at 5:45: "The Comedy of Innocence" (2000, Raúl Ruiz). ♦ Nov. 12 at 3:15 and Nov. 14 at 6: "The Possessed" (1988, Andrzej Wajda). ♦ Nov. 12 at 8:30: "Passion" (1982, Jean-Luc Godard). ♦ Nov. 13 at 1: "Story of Women" (1988, Claude Chabrol). ♦ Nov. 13 at 3:15: "Violette Nozière" (1978, Chabrol). ♦ "Kino! 2005." All films are in German. Nov. 9 at 6: "Science Fiction" (2003, Franz Mueller). ♦ Nov. 9 at 8:15: "Der Flaneur von Berlin—A Tale of Two Cities" (2005, Manfred Wilhelms). ♦ Nov. 10 at 6: "Willenbrock" (2005, Andreas Dresen). ♦ Nov. 10 at 8:15: "Sophie Scholl—The Final Days" (2005, Marc Rothemund). ♦ "Reviewed: Michael Snow." Nov. 11 at 4 and Nov. 14 at 5: "The Central Region" (1971). ♦ Nov. 11 at 8 and Nov. 12 at 7: A program of short films by Michael Snow (1968-69). ♦ Nov. 12 at 1 and Nov. 13 at 3: "New York Eye and Ear Control" (1964) and "Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film" (1970). ♦ Nov. 12 at 3 and Nov. 13 at 5: "Wavelength" (1967) and "Breakfast (Table Top Dolly)" (1976). ♦ Nov. 12 at 5 and Nov. 13 at 1: "Corpus Callosum" (2001).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)— "Some Like It Wilder: The Complete Billy Wilder." Nov. 11 at 7:30 and Nov. 13 at 2 and 6:30: "Sunset Boulevard" (†). ♦ Nov. 13 at 4:30: "Fedora" (1978). ♦ 2005 Machinima Film Festival. Nov. 12 at 5: "Red vs. Blue," season one (Burnie Burns and Matt Hullum).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. Nov. 11-12: "Rosemary's Baby" (1968, Roman Polanski).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through Nov. 22: "Children in the 20th Century." Nov. 13 at 4 and Nov. 15 at 8:45: "Kolya" (1996, Jan Sverák; in Czech and Russian). ♦ Nov. 13 at 6 and Nov. 15 at 8:45: "Come and See" (1985, Elem Klimov; in Russian and Belarusian).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—"A Centenary of Chinese Cinema." All films are in Mandarin. Nov. 9 at 1: "Black Snow" (1990, Xie Fei). ♦ Nov. 10 at 1:15 and 6:15: "To Live" (1994, Zhang Yimou). ♦ Nov. 10 at 4 and 8:45: "The Master of Everything" (2004, Xin Lee). ♦ "An Evening with David Cronenberg." Nov. 9 at 8: "A History of Violence" (2005, David Cronenberg), followed by a discussion with Cronenberg, Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello, and William Hurt. ♦ "The 2005 Leo Awards: Tributes to Ricky Leacock and Amos and Marcia Vogel." Nov. 11 at 3 and 6:15: "A Musical Adventure in Siberia with Sarah Caldwell" (2003, Richard Leacock). ♦ Nov. 11 at 4:30 and 8: "Film as a Subversive Art: Amos Vogel and Cinema 16" (2003, Paul Cronin). ♦ Through Nov. 29: "A Luminous Century: Celebrating Norwegian Cinema." All films are in Norwegian. Nov. 12 at 1:30 and Nov. 14 at 5: "Too Much Norway" (1995, Rune Denstad Langlo and Sigve Endresen). ♦ Nov. 12 at 3:20: "Nine Lives" (1957, Arne Skouen). ♦ Nov. 12 at 5:15: "Kissed by Winter" (2005, Sara Johnsen). ♦ Nov. 12 at 7:15: "The Wayward Girl" (1959, Edith Carlmar), introduced by Liv Ullmann. ♦ Nov. 12 at 9:30: "Next Door" (2005, Pål Sletaune). ♦ Nov. 13 at 1:30: "The Growth of the Soil" (1921, Gunnar Sommerfeldt; silent). ♦ Nov. 13 at 4: "Raid on the Bergen Express" (1928, Uwe Jens Krafft; silent). ♦ Nov. 13 at 6:15: "The Hunt" (1959, Erik Lochen). ♦ Nov. 13 at 8:15 and Nov. 15 at 9:15: "Hawaii, Oslo" (2004, Erik Poppe). ♦

Nov. 14 at 1 and 7: "The Big Christening" (1931, Tancred Ibsen and Einar Sissener). ♦ Nov. 14 at 3 and 9: "Tramp" (1937, Ibsen). ♦ Benefit screening for the Women's Film Preservation Fund. Nov. 15 at 6:30: "The Wobblies" (1979, Deborah Shaffer and Stewart Bird).

READINGS AND TALKS

ADRIAN TOMINE AND SETH
The two acclaimed cartoonists and graphic novelists talk about their work. (Strand Bookstore, Broadway at 12th St. No tickets necessary. Nov. 9 at 6:30.)

LIZA DONNELLY
The longtime *New Yorker* cartoonist, who recently wrote "Funny Ladies: The New Yorker's Greatest Women Cartoonists and Their Cartoons," talks with Victoria Roberts, Marisa Acocella Marchetto, Roz Chast, and a few of her other colleagues. (Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Pl. No tickets necessary. Nov. 9 at 7.)

"THALIA BOOK CLUB"
Marilynne Robinson talks with the literary critic James Wood about her novel "Gilead," which won the Pulitzer Prize earlier this year. (Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Nov. 9 at 7.)

"SPAIN IN OUR HEARTS"
Mónica de la Torre, Martín Espada, Francisco Goldman, and Jaime Manrique celebrate the publication of a new edition of Pablo Neruda's classic epic, which he wrote during the Spanish Civil War. A screening of Leo Hurwitz's film "Heart of Spain" follows the reading. (The Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery, at Bleecker St. For more information, call 212-254-9628. Nov. 9 at 7:30.)

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALISTS
On the eve of finding out who will take home the top honor, most of the twenty nominees, including the novelists E. L. Doctorow and Mary Gaitskill, the nonfiction authors Alan Burdick and Adam Hochschild, and the poets John Ashbery and Vern Rutsala, read from their work. Philip Gourevitch, the editor of *The Paris Review* and a writer for this magazine, is the host. (The New School, 66 W. 12th St. 212-229-5488. Nov. 15 at 7.)

"FESTIVAL!"
Following a screening of the 1967 documentary about the Newport Folk Festival, which captures Bob Dylan's first electrical performance and many other watershed countercultural moments, its director Murray Lerner talks with George Wein, the founder of the Newport gathering, and the veteran folk musician Jim Kweskin. (Makor, 35 W. 67th St. 212-601-1000. Nov. 15 at 7:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

BROTHER THEODORE
Theodore Gottlieb, whose stage name was Brother Theodore and who died at age ninety-four in 2001, performed "apocalyptic one-man shows about life, death and broccoli in Greenwich Village nightclubs to dazzling and disturbing effect," according to his *Times* obituary. Gottlieb was born into wealth in Düsseldorf and lived a hedonistic life style until the Nazis took over and he landed in Dachau; he escaped from the camp by surrendering his family fortune and gained entry into the United States with the help of Albert Einstein, a close friend of his mother. Though Gottlieb's career as an entertainer was successful (sold-out shows at Town Hall in the fifties, multiple appearances on Merv Griffin's talk show in the late sixties and on David Letterman's in the eighties), only a few folks remember him today. One of the more devoted is Jeff Sumerel, a filmmaker from South Carolina who is currently working on a documentary about Gottlieb's life. Sumerel visits Brooklyn to screen rare television footage and parts of the forthcoming film on Nov. 11 at 7. (Barbès, 376 9th St., Park Slope. 718-965-9177.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
The contemporary art market, propelled by a new class of hedge-fund managers, will get its due at **Sotheby's** evening sale on Nov. 9, with such sacred monsters as David Smith ("Cubi XXVIII," from a series of sculptures for open spaces in burnished stainless steel) and Andy Warhol (a blue-and-gray frieze of portraits of Jacqueline Kennedy in mourning) drawing particular attention. A welcome correction to such robust offerings will come in the form of enigmatic masks, musical instruments, and sculptures from Africa and Oceania, auctioned on Nov. 11. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ The familiar, doughy figures of Botero—painted, sculpted, and drawn—will stand out at the **Christie's** evening sale of Latin-American art on Nov. 15 (along with a dreamy mural by Matta and an exquisite portrait of a boy by Diego Rivera). The house also holds a sale of rare Hebrew manuscripts from the collection of the late Salman Schocken on Nov. 15, as well as a sale of American historical documents from the Forbes collection. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ **Phillips** makes its own contribution to the contemporary field with a two-part sale on Nov. 10-11. (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)

ERIK T. JOHNSON

ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES
SMOOTH OPERATOR
Dec. 1-18

The Hong Kong actor Tony Leung, with his urbane good looks and his eerily cool disposition, started on television in the early eighties; less than a decade later, he began to work with such top film directors as John Woo (in "Hard Boiled"), Wong Kar-wai ("Days of Being Wild"), and Hou Hsiao-hsien ("Flowers of Shanghai"). BAM's retrospective of Leung's work includes these three, along with nine other films. (www.bam.org.)

THE THEATRE
PINTER'S YEAR
Dec. 5

The Atlantic Theatre Company revives two plays by Harold Pinter, this year's Nobel laureate in Literature. "The Room," Pinter's first play, from 1957, takes place in a one-room flat; "Celebration," from 1999, depicts three competitive couples at an anniversary dinner. (212-239-6200.)

NIGHT LIFE
ACT TWO
Dec. 5-6

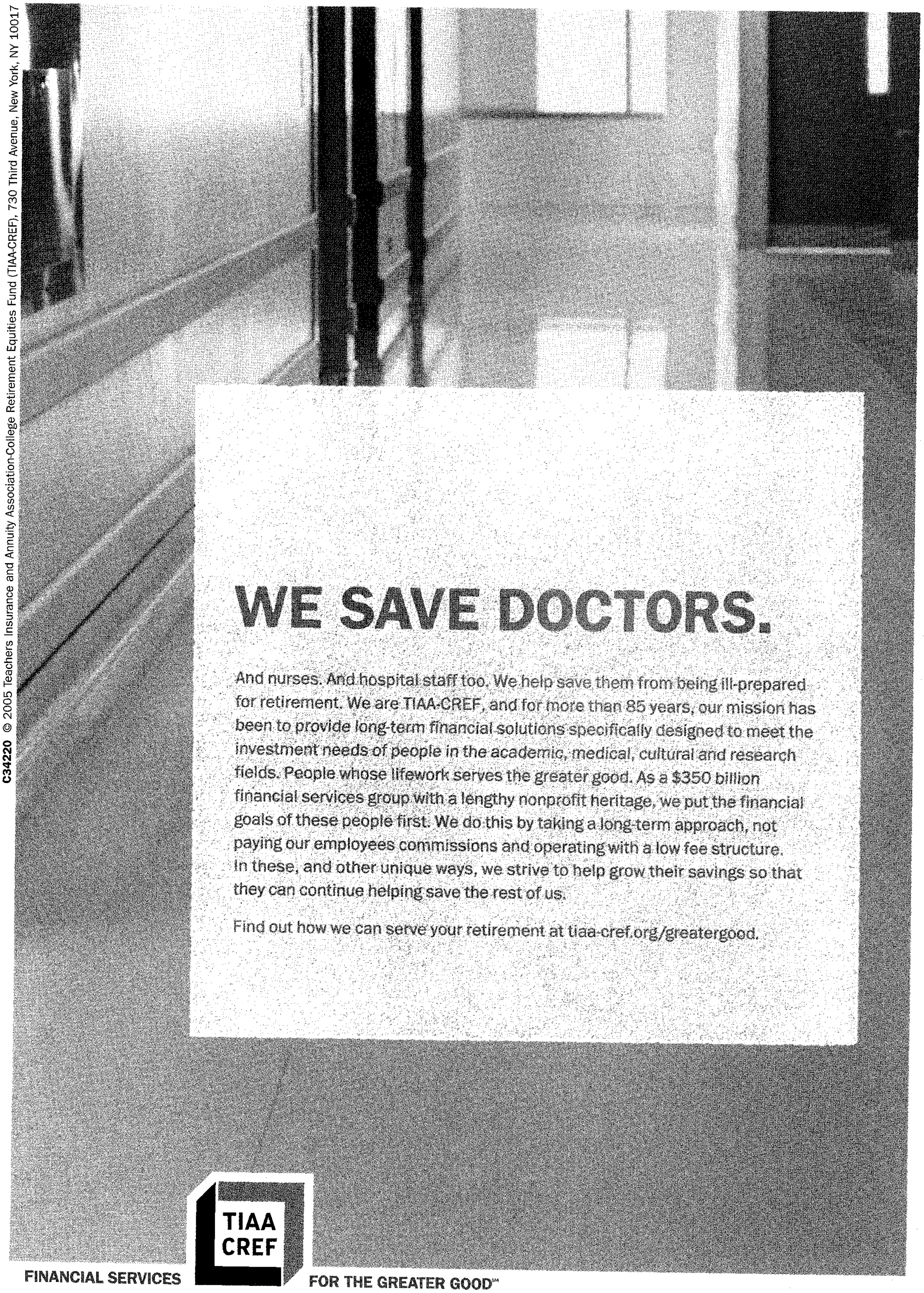
The young singer-songwriter Nellie McKay, who caught critics' attention last year with a double album of acerbic cabaret-tinged material, "Get Away from Me," will appear next spring on Broadway in Wallace Shawn's new translation of "The Threepenny Opera." In the meantime, she prepares for the release of her follow-up record, "Pretty Little Head," with shows at Makor and the Mercury Lounge. (212-601-1000 and 212-260-4700.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
GOODE TIMES
Dec. 7 and Dec. 13

The pianist Richard Goode's "Perspectives" series at Carnegie Hall includes two concerts of music by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven that will also feature the soprano Dawn Upshaw and the Brentano String Quartet. (212-247-7800.)

ART
RECOMBINANT DNA
Dec. 20-April, 2006

Robert Rauschenberg's built-up painting-collage-sculpture hybrids, dubbed "Combines" and made between 1954 and 1964, are at the heart of his inquisitive, inclusive artistic method. More than sixty will be on view in this focussed survey at the Met. (212-535-7710.)



WE SAVE DOCTORS.

And nurses. And hospital staff too. We help save them from being ill-prepared for retirement. We are TIAA-CREF, and for more than 85 years, our mission has been to provide long-term financial solutions specifically designed to meet the investment needs of people in the academic, medical, cultural and research fields. People whose lifework serves the greater good. As a $350 billion financial services group with a lengthy nonprofit heritage, we put the financial goals of these people first. We do this by taking a long-term approach, not paying our employees commissions and operating with a low fee structure. In these, and other unique ways, we strive to help grow their savings so that they can continue helping save the rest of us.

Find out how we can serve your retirement at tiaa-cref.org/greatergood.

TIAA
CREF

FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR THE GREATER GOOD℠

C34220 © 2005 Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF), 730 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

“Novartis drove my cancer into remission in 56 days. Now I’m coaching an all-star.”

Two months after his son was born, John Nesbitt was diagnosed with a deadly cancer. He lost weight, his energy and his dream of teaching his son to play baseball. Today, John has his dream back. A Novartis medicine drove his cancer into remission in just 56 days. No one can promise what the future holds for any cancer patient, but today John feels terrific. He also believes he’s coaching a future major leaguer.

Think what’s possible

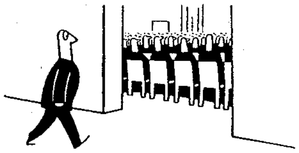
NOVARTIS

www.us.novartis.com

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

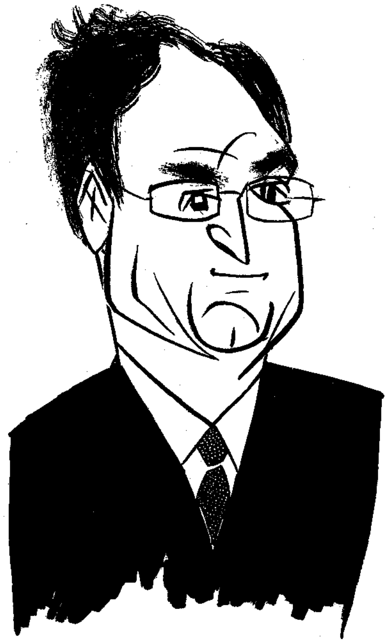
COMMENT
UPS AND DOWNS



During the six months or so prior to and encompassing the nomination and confirmation of John Roberts as Chief Justice of the United States, one phrase was on every Republican senatorial lip. "All of the President's nominees, both now and in the future, deserve a fair up-or-down vote," said Sam Brownback, of Kansas. "Every nominee, no matter if the President is Democrat or Republican, deserves an up-or-down vote," said Jim DeMint, of South Carolina. "We must take action to insure President Bush's nominees are getting the up-or-down vote they deserve," said Kay Bailey Hutchison, of Texas. "Since the day I came to the U.S. Senate," said Pete Domenici, of New Mexico, "I have believed strongly that every nominee deserves an up-or-down vote." The conservative commentariat was equally of one mind about the sanctity of verticality. "The American people," wrote John Podhoretz, in the *Post*, "won't understand why a candidate should be denied an up-or-down vote." The White House, naturally, agreed. "We believe that every judicial nominee deserves an up-or-down vote," said Karl Rove. *Boing, boing*. It was like watching a trampoline exhibition.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Up or down, down or up: there isn't much to be said for the Harriet Miers episode, but at least it ought to shelter us, for a while, from this particular talking point. Harriet Miers was President Bush's nominee. Therefore, according to the catechism, Harriet Miers deserved an up-or-down vote. She didn't get one. Her nomination, for Sandra Day O'Connor's seat on the Supreme Court, didn't even get a hearing from the Senate Judiciary Committee. Nor was her defenestration a consequence of Democratic intransigence. It was a consequence of Republican intransigence. When she withdrew, Brownback put out a statement. "This was a difficult and courageous move for Ms. Miers and the President to make," the Senator said contentedly, "but I think it was the right move."



Samuel A. Alito, Jr.

The pre-Miers formula assumed that up or down meant up. But Miers did not get the hook because of any real danger that this time it might have meant down. Before her withdrawal, and more so afterward, it was clear that she would have been confirmed if the President had stood by her. For most of her conservative critics, complaints about her qualifications and her intellect were a smokescreen for doubts about her ideological reliability. Brownback and a few others, with an eye on the activist base for 2008, probably would have voted against her. But at least an equal number of Democratic senators—whose leader, Harry Reid, had all but endorsed her—probably would have gone the other way. A majority of the majority plus a minority of the minority would have done the trick. Those who yearn for bipartisanship would have hailed the result as a victory for the sensible center over the supposed extremes of right and left. But Democrats, even those who would have voted against her, were well on their way to suspecting that anyone capable of provoking so much conservative enmity might be on some level O.K. In any case, Miers would have donned her black robes fresh from a vivid experience of right-wing vilification. Perhaps she would have bonded in sisterhood with her colleague Ruth Bader Ginsburg and

"The hell with the past—I'd like to put the future behind us."

• •

turned into precisely the independent-minded moderate the right feared. We'll never know.

In truth, the up-or-down vote was never sacred to Republicans. Or Democrats, for that matter. Or Whigs, or Federalists. From the Presidency of the Father of His Country through that of the father of George W. Bush, twelve of the thirty-four Presidential Supreme Court nominees who never made it to the Court never made it to the Senate floor, either. More recently, sixty-four of Bill Clinton's choices for the federal judiciary never came to a vote. A few were threatened with filibuster, and the rest were blocked by even more arbitrary methods. (A filibuster needs forty-one senators to succeed, a "hold" only one.) Clinton's two nominees for the Supreme Court won easy confirmation, but that wasn't because of any principled Republican reluctance to use undemocratic stratagems to thwart him. It was because his nominees were mild-mannered moderates, and because he consulted Republican senators ahead of time.

Samuel A. Alito, Jr., whom Bush nominated for the O'Connor seat last week, has a solid résumé, even if Bush exaggerated in crediting him with an "extraordinary breadth of experience." (Depth, yes; breadth, no. Alito has decades of work experience inside the federal justice system, but none whatsoever outside it.) He is not a Bush crony, and—notwithstanding the curious happenstance that "Samuel Alito" is an anagram of "I am a sellout"—his integrity is not in question. He is mild-mannered, too, and does not appear to share the ideological pugnaciousness and cultural resentfulness of his putative future colleagues Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. People who have worked with Alito and under him, quite a few of them liberal Democrats, vouch for his fair-mindedness. If he's a moderate, though, that will come as news to the conservatives who, having torpedoed Bush's first choice, greeted his second with satisfaction verging on ecstasy.

It's going to take a while to find out. Unlike Miers, Alito has a paper trail as long as the arm of the law. The fifteen years' worth of judicial decisions that he has written, concurred in, or dissented from add up to around five million words—triple the wordage of "War and Peace," "Ulysses," and the King James Bible combined. It wasn't just to pick on the White House that Senator Arlen Specter, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, decided last Thursday to put off Alito's hearings until after New Year's.

The debate over Alito will be powered, inevitably, by the high-octane issue of reproductive rights. We have the word of the nominee's mother that abortion is something her son is against, and there's little question that if Alito had been on the Court in 1973, when Roe v. Wade was decided, he would have been among the dissenters. But it's by no means certain that he would be willing to reverse it a third of a century later. His record on that subject, from what we know of it so far, is mixed. Its most troubling feature is his opinion, fourteen years ago, in Planned Parenthood v. Casey, when he defended a Pennsylvania law that, with certain exceptions, would have forbidden married women to terminate a pregnancy without first informing their husbands. That opinion—which, thanks to the deciding vote of Justice O'Connor, the Supreme Court rejected the following year—suggests a view of women and marriage that is, to put it gently, anachronistic.

The full record is apt to confirm the impression that Alito would move the Court discernibly to the right. That, at bottom, is why Bush nominated him, and that is why senators who do not wish that to happen have a right, maybe a duty, to vote against him. But senators are politicians, and a Washington *Post*–ABC News poll published last Friday showed that the Alito nomination is practically the only part of Bush's performance in office that even half the public approves of. Barring some surprising revelation, a filibuster seems unlikely. But, if the Democrats find cause to decide otherwise, they should not feel they are betraying their small-"d" principles. The filibuster is an affront to commonly understood democratic norms, but then so is the Senate. In the three elections that produced the current lineup—those of 2000, 2002, and 2004—all Republican candidates received about ninety-five million votes, while all Democratic candidates got almost ninety-eight million. The perverse result is a ten-seat Republican majority. The worst that could happen is that the Republicans would abolish the filibuster for judicial nominations, a big first step toward abolishing it altogether. In the long run, or maybe not so long, that would be good for liberal governance. What goes up must come down.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

INK
WAR POET

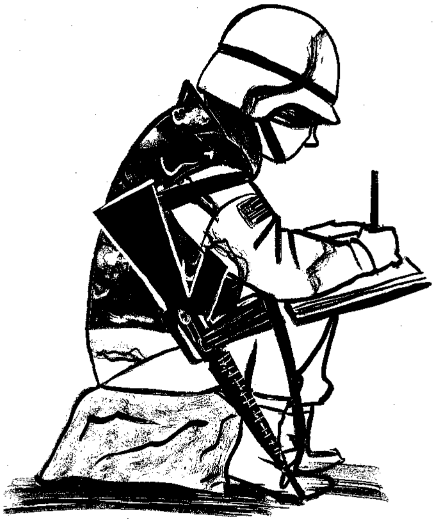
William Butler Yeats had strong opinions about the poets of the First World War: Rupert Brooke, he said, was "the handsomest young man in England"; Wilfred Owen's stuff was "all blood, dirt & sucked sugar stick." It is interesting to imagine how he would have sized up Brian Turner, a thirty-eight-year-old former Army sergeant from Fresno, California, and the author of a book of poems about a year he spent deployed in Iraq. Turner describes himself as five feet nine and a hundred and eighty pounds, with short but unbuzzed hair and a growing-out goatee: "Not the best-looking mug in the world, but I do what I can with it." His début collection, "Here, Bullet," is more sandy than muddy, has plenty of blood (as well as "Grease guns, pistols, RPGs" and "all the *fucks* and *goddamns* / and *Jesus Christs* of the wounded"), and offers its share of sweetness, in the form of date palms, chai tea, and off-hours prostitutes observed through the lenses of high-powered binoculars. In a poem called "R&R," he conjures a faraway place "where the beer is so cold it sweats in your hand, / cool as her kissing you with crushed ice, / her tongue wet with blackberry and melon."

"Here, Bullet" won this year's Beatrice Hawley Award from a coöperative poetry press in Maine called Alice James Books (previous winners have included manuscripts with titles like "Self and Simulacra," "Camera Lyrica," and "Utopic"), and came out last week. On the acknowledgments page, Turner thanks Fi, Jax, Bosch, Liu, Noodles, Zoo, Bodiggidy, Shaft, and Nurse Betty. Nurse Betty is a male medic, and Bodiggidy is Specialist Bogans—"a really good guy."

Turner—also known as Sergeant T. or "the professor"—was a team leader in the first Stryker brigade to be sent into the combat zone, and was stationed, for much of 2004, near Mosul. He wrote his poems secretly. People in the Army knew that he had a master's degree, but no one ever asked him what it was for—it was an M.F.A. in poetry, from the University of Oregon—and he saw no reason to advertise it. Noncommissioned officers, he says, are the "backbone of the Army," and "it's hard to be hard-nosed if you're writing poetry." He didn't want his underlings to think he was writing about "flowers and stuff like that."

Turner's first manuscript, which he completed in graduate school, was a protest of the War on Drugs. His second, "In the Bullet Factory," also unpublished, was about his experiences with the 10th Mountain Division in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1999 and 2000. As a war poet, he sidesteps the classic distinction between romance and irony, opting instead for the surreal. In "Dreams from the Malaria Pills (Bosch)," he describes his friend Tom Bosch's nightmares—"absolute doozies," Bosch says—of setting himself on fire and of shaving his face off "like a rind of fruit . . . sloughing the blood and skin in sinkwater." When they got back to the States, and Turner told Bosch that he had written a poem about his dreams, Bosch remembers saying, "Oh, jeez, what are you writing, a book of horrors here or what?"

The only book of poems that Turner brought with him to Iraq was called "Iraqi Poetry Today." He already knew and loved the epic of Gilgamesh—the story of the warrior-king of Uruk, who terrorizes his people, battles monsters, and seeks immortality. It was thrilling, he said, "to know that Gilgamesh was the land where I was *at*." Tablets on which the legend was recorded in cuneiform, by a Babylonian scribe named Sin-leqi-unninni, were found in the ancient city of Nineveh, near Mosul. "We were out in the ruins of Nineveh, it was January or early February, and it was snowing six inches to a foot deep," Turner said. "I don't know if any of the other soldiers knew about the history of Gilgamesh and the tablets and where we really were. To me it was amazing, a beautiful place. But at the same time to know that we were walking in formation and we were doing our job—the dichotomy was odd.



Brian Turner

"It's sort of like San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. It's big like that, but there are no trees, just this barren, hilly place, and we were just going down in the hollows between the hilltops and then we found a little place where we could overwatch. We just sat there in the snow and watched for mortar rounds being launched in the city." Later, when Turner wrote a poem about the tablets, he dedicated it to Sin-leqi-unninni.

—*Dana Goodyear*

THE ACADEMY
TALKING THE TAWK

CHICAGO
NEW YORK
DENVER

Professor William Labov is to American dialect what Lewis and Clark are to American geography. He's the pathfinder. Labov's new work, which is called "The Atlas of North American

English," constitutes the first coast-to-coast charting of all the major dialects spoken in the continental United States and Canada. The dialects are represented on a hundred and thirty-nine color-coded maps, and software that accompanies the book lets you click on different regions of the country and eavesdrop on people talking. Or you can search for single words—"go," "do," for instance—and hear how widely their pronunciations vary from place to place.

One evening recently, Labov and his two co-authors, Sharon Ash and Charles Boberg, introduced the book at a reception in N.Y.U.'s D'Agostino Hall, as part of the Thirty-fourth NWAV (New Ways of Analyzing Variation) linguistic conference. The room was full of young NWAV linguists, whose field Labov more or less invented—he is often called the father of sociolinguistics—and who treated him with a mixture of awe and filial tenderness, making sure "Bill" had enough to eat and drink, and that the Web site he would be demonstrating was ready to roll.

Labov, who is seventy-seven, is the director of the linguistics lab at the University of Pennsylvania. He is small and wiry and fit-looking. At N.Y.U., he was asked a lot of questions about the local dialect, commonly known as Brooklynese. Its three most prominent features are the raised "a" in words like "past" (*peahst*), the "aw" sound in words like "coffee" (*cawfee*), and, of course, the dropped "r" in words like "water" (*watta*). Labov explained his contention that the city's dropped "r" has its origins in posh British speech: when F.D.R. dropped his "r"s ("The only thing we have to *feah* is *feah* itself") and Katharine Hepburn dropped hers ("My, she was *yah*"), it sounded upper class. But after the Second World War, Labov said, with the loss of Britain's imperial status "r"-less British speech ceased to be regarded as "prestige speech"—William F. Buckley was a *consuvative*, but George W. Bush is not—and the dropping of "r"s became exclusively working class.

"Before the war," Labov said, "the judges in the gangster pictures dropped their 'r's, but after the war only the hoodlums did it." Ralph Kramden, Archie Bunker, and Tony Soprano all speak Brooklynese, and the dialect immediately evokes their regular-guy milieu.

Apart from the adenoidal "oi" sound in words like "bird" (*boid*), which has largely disappeared from the area, Brooklynese has remained unchanged for the past fifty years. "The dialect spoken by all those firemen on TV after September 11 was pure, unmodified New York speech from the nineteen-fifties," Labov said. However, New York's dialect is intensely regional. There is a tiny portion of eastern New Jersey, along the edge of the Hudson, where you can hear Brooklynese, but by the time you're in Paterson you're well into what Labov calls the Jersey "nasal system." You can hear Brooklynese

---

ON SECOND THOUGHT: NEW NOTES FROM HARRIET TO GEORGE

October 27, 2005

Hi! Just a quick note to say that you looked heavyish last time I saw you, which, come to think of it, was this morning, in the Oval Office, when you accepted my withdrawal (which you had secretly demanded) and ruined my life and dreams and spirit. I hope we can stay friends. And, again, I am sorry for vomiting on your desk. Best to your wife (Laurel??).

Harriet Miers, NOT a Supreme Court nominee

October 27, later on

It dawns on me that I may not have mentioned that you ruined my life. Or did I? Also, do you ever wonder where you'd be if it wasn't for your father, who, when you think about it, was a really amazing person, who did SOOO much in his life, especially compared with you who have done so little? I read that you were a cheerleader once. Girls do that a lot. Eucalyptus is good for absorbing bad smells (like human vomit). That was a lot of vomit. But then I had a tough few weeks, in which I was humiliated in the national media, and you and your staff (some of whom may be indicted soon??) were not one scintilla of help. Friends forever!

October 27, quite late

Pinot Noirs are nice. This second bottle tastes better than the first, actually. Sometimes I pretend I'm the lead singer of the O'Jays ("People all over the world, join in, start a love train, love train"). Do you think I'm pretty? Once, I staged a mock wedding to you in my home, alone, except for Mr. Pickles, my cat. It was very, very late, like it is now, and I dressed in a fluffy white robe and walked slowly down the pretend aisle and said "I do" and closed my eyes and smooched your skinny, chapped lips because you were, to me, so perfect. I would like to file imaginary divorce proceedings against you now and withhold connubial favors. Let's see what THAT does for that eye tic. Friends?

Your ex-wife, Harriet Miers

October 28, late

What do I mean by emotional breakdown? I guess I mean that the edges of everything seem to be rounded and sound disappears if I look at a thing too long. What is dignity? The phrase "Pass the brownies, please" plays over and over in my head. I was happy once, just a few weeks ago.

I have no idea of the time or date or where I am.

It's not really a bench, is it? I mean, there are chairs. You said it was going to be like Roberts. Why lie? Want to know a secret? I don't believe in God.

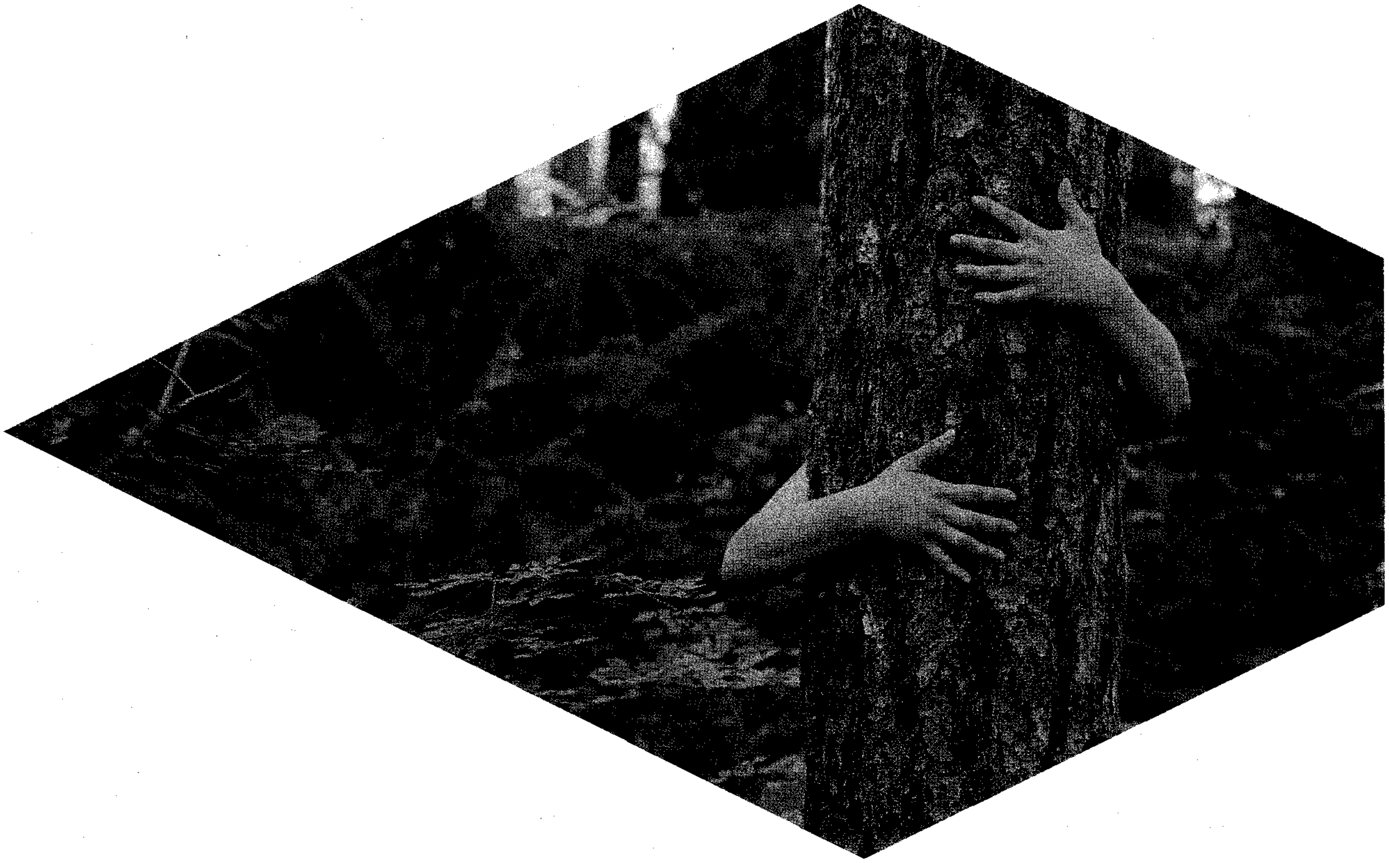
October 28, the clock moves, as if on its own

I just spoke with Michael Moore. What an inquisitive, interesting man. He said that many of the things I shared with him about being White House counsel were very, very interesting to him. We made plans to meet for coffee soon, so that I can show him some papers. Do you know what phrase has less and less meaning for me with each passing second? "Attorney-client privilege."

October 29

I have a question: Is Lewis Libby married? Because, if he's not, he will be, in jail. Bye for now, friend!

—*John Kenney*



Who'd have thought that a natural fiber could help fight diabetes?

Well actually, we did.

You gotta love nature. Example: Cellulose fiber, the most abundant, renewable carbohydrate found in nature, can be used to help prevent diabetes. Dow METHOCEL™ dietary fiber is made from natural cellulose. In tests, Dow scientists and the USDA found that adding a few grams of METHOCEL™ to a high-fat diet slowed fat absorption, potentially reducing the development of insulin resistance – a precursor to Type II diabetes. The availability of METHOCEL™ in the foods we buy will make it easy to get the fiber we need. Cutting our fat and sugar intake wouldn't hurt either. See how Dow is using the right chemistry to help protect our health at dow.com.

Health

Lifestyle

Communication

Transportation

Building

DOW®

Living.
Improved daily.™

www.dow.com

®Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company

spoken in parts of New Orleans and Cincinnati, Labov added, the legacy of the New York bankers who moved to those cities in the nineteenth century to finance the cotton trade.

As often happens when Labov appears in public, he was asked if he could perform a variation on the "My Fair Lady" trick: to identify what part of New York City a person came from, based on his speech. Labov shook his head, causing his enormous glasses to slide down his nose. "People want me to tell them which block," he said. "The fact is—but don't write this, because it will enrage people—Brooklynese is exactly the same whether it's spoken in the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island or in Brooklyn. Or the Lower East Side." The city's dialect, he said, is much more indicative of one's social status than of one's neighborhood. "Although no one wants to admit this," he added, "because we're supposed to live in a classless society."

One of Labov's most famous linguistic studies involved interviewing New Yorkers at Saks Fifth Avenue, in the nineteen-sixties. He found that customers on the upper floors, where the goods were more expensive, were far less likely to drop their "r"s than those on the lower floors, and that the floorwalkers almost never dropped theirs, while the cashiers sometimes did, and the stock boys always did. "It didn't matter which part of New York they were from," he said.

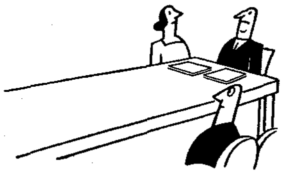
These days, Labov found, the most extreme dialect change in the country is taking place in the Chicago area. "The 'eah' sound, which you hear in 'happened'—*heahppened*—is a young, very invasive sound that is rapidly changing a number of other sounds around it," he said. This so-called "Northern Cities Shift" is spreading toward St. Louis along I-55, transforming the Inland North dialect, which used to be the model for standard American pronunciation. Labov explained that locals in such areas as northern Ohio and Michigan traditionally spoke precise English because they wanted to distinguish themselves from the speakers of Southern dialects in their states—a split that seems to go back to the Civil War. John Kenyon, the pronunciation editor for the second edition of Webster's, in the thirties, came from northeastern Ohio, and he helped make Inland North the standard American dialect.

What causes dialects to change? Not television, Labov said. The people he calls "extreme speakers"—those who have the greatest linguistic influence on others—tend to be visible local people: "politicians, Realtors, bank clerks." But isn't slang a bottom-up phenomenon? "Slang is just the paint on the hood of the car," Labov said. "Most of the important changes in American speech are not happening at the level of grammar or language—which used to be the case—but at the level of sound itself."

Nary an "r" was dropped nor an "a" raised during the question-and-answer session that followed Labov's presentation. As people were gathering their things to leave, however, a security guard asked a departing guest, "Is the professa's tawk finished?"

—*John Seabrook*

OVERHEARD
TRUE BELIEVER



Patrick J. Fitzgerald, the gangbusting son-of-a-doorman U.S. Attorney assigned to investigate the Valerie Plame leak case, has lately seemed to elicit more appellations than just about anybody. He's "Eliot Ness with a Harvard degree" (his colleagues), "a righteous, homespun voice of reason" (the *Times*), "like a Bing Crosby movie" (opposing counsel). Even his enemies, it turns out, can't resist parsing his character.

In a series of freewheeling conversations that took place at a Minnesota prison in May, 2000, and were surreptitiously taped by the federal government, the blind cleric Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman; his lawyer, Lynne Stewart; and a translator, Mohammed Yousry, traded opinions on a range of subjects, including Fitzgerald. (He prosecuted Abdel Rahman for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and wrote a set of rules, known as Special Administrative Measures, or SAMs, to hinder the Sheikh's ability to communicate from jail. Stewart and Yousry were later convicted for conspiring to help him do just that.) The three discussed prison food, the Sheikh's sweet tooth, women, e-mail, Egyptian politics, Cat Stevens, the Beatles, John Gotti, and a number of mutual acquaintances. Their thoughts on Patrick Fitzgerald:

YOUSRY: Who stops Dr. Aziza [Abdel Rahman's personal doctor] from visiting? Is it this prison, or is it the judge? It is uh, uh, uhm...

STEWART: The SAMs....SAM is the evil Fitzgerald.

YOUSRY: Who is responsible for SAM, is it Fitzgerald?

STEWART: Fitzgerald.

YOUSRY: So can we ask...Fitzgerald's...permission...to bring Dr. Aziza to see the Sheikh, even though...the SAM does not allow her to visit?

STEWART: He won't.

YOUSRY: Can Fitzgerald allow that? Is it in his power, or he has to ask Janet Reno?

STEWART: No, I think anything is in his power.

YOUSRY: Lynne is saying, sir, that Fitzgerald is in charge of all these things....

ABDEL RAHMAN: Oh yeah?

YOUSRY: Yeah....

STEWART: I will try. But [Fitzgerald] is much more evil than McCarthy. [Andrew McCarthy was also a prosecutor in the 1993 bombing case.]

YOUSRY: She says, sir, that he is more of a devil and more evil than McCarthy.

ABDEL RAHMAN: Oh yeah!

YOUSRY: Uhm.

STEWART: Yeah, he is—

ABDEL RAHMAN: We thought that McCarthy was more dangerous.

YOUSRY: We thought that McCarthy was really a, a devil.

STEWART: A devil. Well, Fitzgerald I think is more so. He's, uh...he's like a crusader.

YOUSRY: She says, sir, that—

STEWART: He has it in the heart.

YOUSRY: Fitzgerald is different from McCarthy. Fitzgerald believes in all these things in his heart, he has the faith of doing them in the same way the crusaders did; crusader, I mean, same as the crusaders' battle. He is more dangerous this way.

ABDEL RAHMAN: Ah!

STEWART: "This will never happen again. There will never be a bomb [that] explodes [in] an American Embassy again!" You know.

YOUSRY: When he stands up to speak, he says, this will never happen again to any American Embassy. We have to exterminate them all, we have to defend ourselves. He believes in that.

ABDEL RAHMAN: Yeah.

YOUSRY: He is not saying it in the same way McCarthy did, to gain the support of the jury.

—*Lauren Collins*

"Strong buy" should mean "strong buy," not "please buy."

TALK TO CHUCK™

charles SCHWAB

Schwab Equity Ratings.® At other brokerages, as many as 43% of stocks are rated "buy." At Schwab, we believe stock analysts should tell it like it is, not how they'd like it to be. So we came up with our own rating system. Our rigorous 12-step approach rates stocks using measurable, real-life factors like risk, momentum and valuation analysis. With two remarkable results: 1. On average, our buys have outperformed the S&P 500.® 2. Our buys have never outnumbered our sells. Log on, drop in or call.

SCHWAB.COM 1-800-4SCHWAB

The Schwab Equity Ratings and stock lists or models are not personal recommendations for any particular investor and do not take into account financial, investment or other objectives and may not be suitable for any particular investor. Before buying, investors should consider whether the investment is suitable for themselves and their portfolios. Additionally, investors should consider any recent market or company news. Stocks can be volatile and entail risk, and individual stocks may not be suitable for an investor.

Performance is hypothetical, not actual, and does not reflect market-trading factors such as limited trading liquidity. Past hypothetical performance is no indication of future results and no indication of what an investor would realize in relying on Schwab Equity Ratings. Performance of a single stock or group of stocks within a Schwab Equity Ratings model performance cohort can vary greatly from the performance of that cohort. The S&P 500 Index is a capitalization-weighted index of the 500 largest U.S. companies and treats dividends as reinvested. The cohort (group of "A" rated stocks and group of "B" rated stocks) performance returns treat each stock as equal weighted, and dividends are not reinvested. Indices are unmanaged, do not incur management fees and expenses and cannot be invested in directly. ©2005 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Member SIPC. (0905-8113) ADS33119FUL

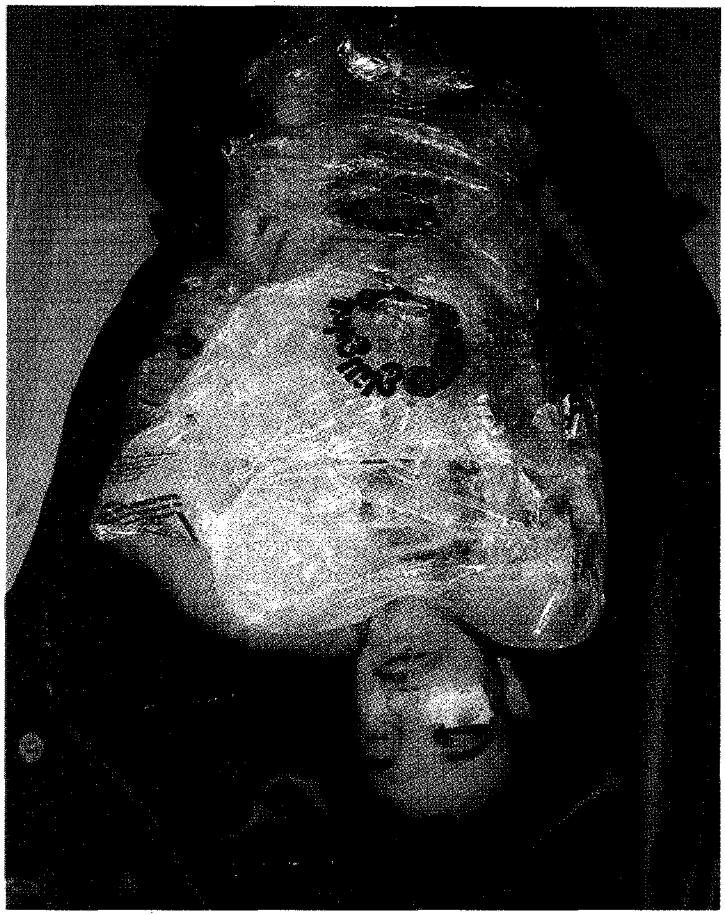
A REPORTER AT LARGE

A DEADLY INTERROGATION

Can the C.I.A. legally kill a prisoner?

BY JANE MAYER

At the end of a secluded cul-de-sac, in a fast-growing Virginia suburb favored by employees of the Central Intelligence Agency, is a handsome replica of an old-fashioned farmhouse, with a white-railed front porch. The large back yard has a swimming pool, which, on a recent October afternoon, was neatly covered. In the driveway were two cars, a late-model truck, and an all-terrain vehicle. The sole discordant note was struck by a faded American flag on the porch; instead of fluttering in the autumn breeze, it was folded on a heap of old Christmas ornaments.



Manadel al-Jamadi died at Abu Ghraib in November of 2003.

The house belongs to Mark Swanner, a forty-six-year-old C.I.A. officer who has performed interrogations and polygraph tests for the agency, which has employed him at least since the nineteen-nineties. (He is not a covert operative.) Two years ago, at Abu Ghraib prison, outside Baghdad, an Iraqi prisoner in Swanner's custody, Manadel al-Jamadi, died during an interrogation. His head had been covered with a plastic bag, and he was shackled in a crucifixion-like pose that inhibited his ability to breathe; according to forensic pathologists who have examined the case, he asphyxiated. In a subsequent internal investigation, United States government authorities classified Jamadi's death as a "homicide," meaning that it resulted from unnatural causes. Swanner has not been charged with a crime and continues to work for the agency.

After September 11th, the Justice Department fashioned secret legal guidelines that appear to indemnify C.I.A. officials who perform aggressive, even violent interrogations outside the United States. Techniques such as waterboarding—the near-drowning of a suspect—have been implicitly authorized by an Administration that feels that such methods may be necessary to win the war on terrorism. (In 2001, Vice-President Dick Cheney, in an interview on "Meet the Press," said that the government might have to go to "the dark side" in handling terrorist suspects, adding, "It's going to be vital for us to use any means at our disposal.") The harsh treatment of Jamadi and other prisoners in C.I.A. custody, however, has inspired an emotional debate in Washington, raising questions about what limits should be placed on agency officials who interrogate foreign terrorist suspects outside U.S. territory.

This fall, in response to the exposure of widespread prisoner abuse at American detention facilities abroad—among them Abu Ghraib; Guantánamo Bay, in Cuba; and Bagram Air Base, in Afghanistan—John McCain, the Republican senator from Arizona, introduced a bill in Congress that would require Americans holding prisoners abroad to follow the same standards of humane treatment required at home by the U.S. Constitution. Prisoners must not be brutalized, the bill states, regardless of their "nationality or physical location." On October 5th, in a rebuke to President Bush, who strongly opposed McCain's proposal, the Senate voted 90–9 in favor of it.

Senior Administration officials have led a fierce, and increasingly visible, fight to protect the C.I.A.'s classified interrogation protocol. Late last month, Cheney and Porter Goss, the C.I.A. director, had an unusual forty-five-minute private meeting on Capitol Hill with Senator McCain, who was tortured as a P.O.W. during the Vietnam War. They argued that the C.I.A. sometimes needs the "flexibility" to treat detainees in the war on terrorism in "cruel, inhuman, and degrading" ways. Cheney sought to add an exemption to McCain's bill, permitting brutal methods when "such operations are vital to the protection of the United States or its citizens from terrorist attack." A Washington *Post* editorial decried Cheney's visit, calling him the "Vice-President for Torture." In the coming weeks, a conference committee of the House and the Senate will decide whether McCain's proposal becomes law; three of the nine senators who voted against the measure are on the committee.

The outcome of this wider political debate may play a role in determining the fate of Swanner, whose name has not been publicly disclosed before, and who declined several requests to be interviewed. Passage of the McCain legislation by both Houses of Congress would mean that there is strong political opposition to the abusive treatment of prisoners, and would put increased pressure on the Justice Department to prosecute interrogators like Swanner—who could conceivably be charged with assault, negligent manslaughter, or torture. Swanner's lawyer, Nina Ginsberg, declined to discuss his case on the record. But he has been under investigation by the Justice Department for more than a year.

Manadel al-Jamadi was captured by Navy SEALs at 2 A.M. on November 4, 2003, after a violent struggle at his house, outside Baghdad. Jamadi savagely fought one of the SEALs before being subdued in his kitchen; during the altercation, his stove fell on them. The C.I.A. had identified him as a "high-value" target, because he had allegedly supplied the explosives used in several atrocities perpetrated by insurgents, including the bombing of the Baghdad headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in October, 2003. After being removed from his house, Jamadi was manhandled by several of the SEALs, who gave him a black eye and a cut on his face; he was then transferred to C.I.A. custody, for interrogation at Abu Ghraib. According to witnesses, Jamadi was walking and speaking when he arrived at the prison. He was taken to a shower room for interrogation. Some forty-five minutes later, he was dead.

For most of the time that Jamadi was being interrogated at Abu Ghraib, there were only two people in the room with him. One was an Arabic-speaking translator for the C.I.A. working on a private contract, who has been identified in military-court papers only as "Clint C." He was given immunity against criminal prosecution in exchange for his coöperation. The other person was Mark Swanner.

In the spring of 2004, the fact of pervasive prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib became public, on "60 Minutes II" and in a series of articles in these pages by Seymour M. Hersh. Photographs, taken by U.S. soldiers, that showed Iraqi prisoners being hooded, sexually humiliated, and threatened with dogs were published around the world. One of the most harrowing images was of Jamadi's severely battered corpse, which had been wrapped in plastic and put on ice; he became known in the media as the Ice Man.

Around this time, John Helgerson, the C.I.A.'s inspector general, sent investigators to Iraq and San Diego to interview witnesses about the agency's role in Jamadi's death. These investigators determined that there was the possibility of criminality—the threshold level required by the intelligence agency in order for the case to be referred to the Justice Department. The agency did so, and officials in the Justice Department then forwarded the case to the office of Paul McNulty, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, which has jurisdiction over C.I.A. headquarters. The dossier has been there for more than a year. A lawyer familiar with the case, who asked not to be named, said that the Swanner file seemed to be "lying kind of fallow."

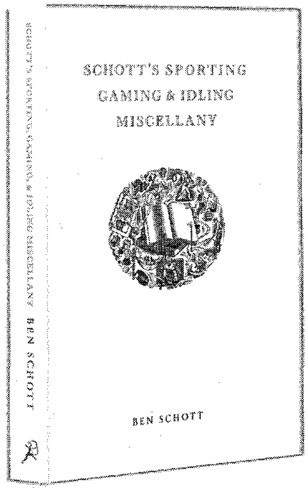
A spokeswoman for McNulty said that he would have no comment on the case, because it was still under investigation. (Last month, President Bush nominated McNulty to the position of Deputy Attorney General, the second most powerful job in the Justice Department.) No other official in the Justice Department would discuss on the record why, more than two years after Jamadi's death, no decision has been made about pressing charges against anyone.

A government official familiar with the case, who declined to be named, indicated that establishing guilt in the case might be complicated, because of Jamadi's rough handling by the SEALs before he entered the custody of the C.I.A. Yet, in the past two years, several of the Navy SEALs who captured Jamadi and delivered him to C.I.A. officials have faced abuse charges in military-justice proceedings, and have been exonerated. Moreover, three medical experts who have examined Jamadi's case told me that the injuries he sustained from the SEALs could not have caused his death.

Fred Hitz, who served as the C.I.A.'s inspector general from 1990 to 1998, and who is now a lecturer in public and international affairs at Princeton University, said of Bush Administration officials, "I just think they're playing stall ball." He told me that he had no inside knowledge of the Swanner case, but he believes that,

Where are you?

Slothful Louche Gaming Athletic Sporting Vigorous Olympian
Asleep Idle Corinthian Active Coltish Competitive Agonistic



Schott's Sporting, Gaming, & Idlling Miscellany
The newest book from
international bestseller Ben Schott

PRO-RODEO EVENTS

ROUGHSTOCK EVENTS	TIMED EVENTS
bareback riding	*steer wrestling • team roping,*
saddle bronc riding	*tie-down roping*
bull riding	*barrel racing • steer roping*

MONOPOLY MONEY

At the beginning of every game of Monopoly each player receives $1,500 from the Bank in the following denominations:

2 x $500 • 2 x $100 • 2 x $50 • 6 x $20 • 5 x $10 • 5 x $5 • 5 x $1

BECKHAM'S BODY ART

David Beckham has, to date, the following tattoos inked upon his body:

Back of neck	winged cross	Left forearm	*Ut Amen et Foveam*[2]
Lower back	*Cruz, Brooklyn*	Right forearm	*VII*
Down spine	guardian angel	Right forearm	*Perfectio in Spiritu*[3]
Between shoulders	*Romeo*	Right triceps	angel, with text *In the face of adversity*
Left forearm	*Victoria*[1]		

[1] His wife's name is written in Hindi. Some have rather churlishly pointed out that it may contain a spelling mistake. [2] 'So that I love and cherish'. [3] 'Spiritual perfection'.

BTW – *Mike Tyson has these tattoos:*			
Right triceps	*Mao Tse-tung*	Left forearm	*Monica Turner*
Left triceps	*Arthur Ashe*	Face/left eye	'tribal motif'
		Stomach	*Che Guevera*

Also available
Schott's Original Miscellany
and
Schott's Food & Drink Miscellany

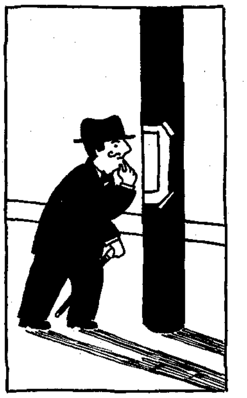
BLOOMSBURY

AVAILABLE WHEREVER
BOOKS ARE SOLD
WWW.BLOOMSBURYUSA.COM

for numerous reasons, ranging from protecting national security to avoiding political embarrassment, Administration officials "would be opposed to any accountability in this case. They want it to disappear off the screen." (A spokesman for the C.I.A. said that its internal investigation into Jamadi's death was "nearly complete," making it "inappropriate to discuss any of the details.")

John Radsan, a lawyer formerly in the C.I.A.'s Office of General Counsel, says, "Along with the usual problems of dealing with classified information in a criminal case, this could open a can of worms if a C.I.A. official in this case got indicted—a big fat can of worms about what set of rules apply to people like Jamadi. The sixty-four-thousand-dollar question is: What has been authorized? Can the C.I.A. torture people? A case like this opens up Pandora's box."

Since September 11, 2001, the C.I.A.'s treatment and interrogation of terrorist suspects has remained almost entirely hidden from public view. Human-rights groups estimate that some ten thousand foreign suspects are being held in U.S. detention facilities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Cuba, and other countries. A small but unknown part of this population is in the custody of the C.I.A., which, as Dana Priest reported recently in the Washington *Post,* has operated secret prisons in Thailand and in Eastern Europe. It is also unclear how seriously the agency deals with allegations of prisoner abuse. The C.I.A. tends to be careful about following strict legal procedures, including the briefing of the top-ranking members of the congressional intelligence committees on its covert activities. But experts could recall no instance of a C.I.A. officer being tried in a public courtroom for manslaughter or murder. Thomas Powers, the author of two books about the C.I.A., told me, "I've never heard of anyone at the C.I.A. being convicted of a killing." He added that a case such as Jamadi's had awkward political implications. "Is the C.I.A. capable of addressing an illegal killing by its own hands?" he asked. "My guess is not." Whereas the military has subjected itself to a dozen internal investigations in the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib scandal, and has punished more than two hundred soldiers for wrongdoing, the agency has undertaken almost no public self-examination.



The C.I.A. has reportedly been implicated in at least four deaths of detainees in Afghanistan and Iraq, including that of Jamadi, and has referred eight potentially criminal cases involving abuse and misconduct to the Justice Department. In March, Goss, the C.I.A.'s director, testified before Congress that "we don't do torture," and the agency's press office issued a release stating, "All approved interrogation techniques, both past and present, are lawful and do not constitute torture. . . . C.I.A. policies on interrogation have always followed legal guidance from the Department of Justice. If an individual violates the policy, then he or she will be held accountable."

Yet the government has brought charges against only one person affiliated with the agency: David Passaro, a low-level contract employee, not a full-fledged C.I.A. officer. In 2003, Passaro, while interrogating an Afghan prisoner, allegedly beat him with a flashlight so severely that he eventually died from his injuries. In two other incidents of prisoner abuse, the *Times* reported last month, charges probably will not be brought against C.I.A. personnel: the 2003 case of an Iraqi prisoner who was forced head first into a sleeping bag, then beaten; and the 2002 abuse of an Afghan prisoner who froze to death after being stripped and chained to the floor of a concrete cell. (The C.I.A. supervisor involved in the latter case was subsequently promoted.)

One reason these C.I.A. officials may not be facing charges is that, in recent years, the Justice Department has established a strikingly narrow definition of torture. In August, 2002, the department's Office of Legal Counsel sent a memo on interrogations to the White House, which argued that a coercive technique was torture only when it induced pain equivalent to what a person experiencing death or organ failure might suffer. By implication, all lesser forms of physical and psychological mistreatment—what critics have called "torture lite"—were legal. The memo also said that torture was illegal only when it could be proved that the interrogator intended to cause the required level of pain. And it provided interrogators with another large exemption: torture might be acceptable if an interrogator was acting in accordance with military "necessity." A source familiar with the memo's origins, who declined to speak on the record, said that it "was written as an immunity, a blank check." In 2004, the "torture memo," as it became known, was leaked, complicating the nomination of Alberto R. Gonzales to be Attorney General; as White House counsel, Gonzales had approved the memo. The Administration subsequently revised the guidelines, using language that seemed more restrictive. But a little-noticed footnote protected the coercive methods permitted by the "torture memo," stating that they did not violate the "standards set forth in this memorandum."

The Bush Administration has resisted disclosing the contents of two Justice Department memos that established a detailed interrogation policy for the Pentagon and the C.I.A. A March, 2003, classified memo was "breathtaking," the same source said. The document dismissed virtually all national and international laws regulating the treatment of prisoners, including war-crimes and assault statutes, and it was radical in its view that in wartime the President can fight enemies by whatever means he sees fit. According to the memo, Congress has no constitutional right to interfere with the President in his role as Commander-in-Chief, including making laws that limit the ways in which prisoners may be interrogated. Another classified Justice Department memo, issued in August, 2002, is said to authorize numerous "enhanced" interrogation techniques for the C.I.A. These two memos sanction such extreme measures that, even if the agency wanted to discipline or prosecute agents who stray beyond its own comfort level, the legal tools to do so may no longer exist. Like the torture memo, these documents are believed to have been signed by Jay Bybee, the former head of the Office of Legal Counsel, but written by a Justice Department lawyer, John Yoo, who is now a professor of law at Berkeley.

For nearly a year, Democratic senators critical of alleged abuses have been demanding to see these memos. "We need to know what was authorized," Carl

Levin, a Democrat from Michigan, told me. "Was it waterboarding? The use of dogs? Stripping detainees?...The refusal to give us these documents is totally inexcusable." Levin is a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is supposed to have an oversight role in relation to the C.I.A. "The Administration is getting away with just saying no," he went on. "There's no claim of executive privilege. There's no claim of national security—we've offered to keep it classified. It's just bullshit. They just don't want us to know what they're doing, or have done."

I don't see why you don't consider Cleveland or Pittsburgh. New York City is just such a competitive place – so many talented people there.
My mom, motivational speaker
E.S.R.
E.S.R.

By the summer of 2003, the insurgency against the U.S. occupation of Iraq had grown into a confounding and lethal insurrection, and the Pentagon and the White House were pressing C.I.A. agents and members of the Special Forces to get the kind of intelligence needed to crush it. On orders from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, General Geoffrey Miller, who had overseen coercive interrogations of terrorist suspects at Guantánamo, imposed similar methods at Abu Ghraib. In October of that year, however—a month before Jamadi's death—the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel issued an opinion stating that Iraqi insurgents were covered by the Geneva Conventions, which require the humane treatment of prisoners and forbid coercive interrogations. The ruling reversed an earlier interpretation, which had concluded, erroneously, that Iraqi insurgents were not protected by international law.

As a result of these contradictory mandates from Washington, the rules of engagement at Abu Ghraib became muddy, and the tactics grew increasingly ad hoc. Jeffrey H. Smith, a former general counsel of the C.I.A., told me, "Abu Ghraib has its roots at the top. I think this uncertainty about who was and who was not covered by the Geneva Conventions, and all this talk that they're all terrorists, bred the climate in which this kind of abuse takes place."

At Abu Ghraib, the confusion over interrogation and detention methods was compounded by the fact that C.I.A. officials worked side by side with U.S. military people. Colonel Janis Karpinski, a former commander of the 800th Military Police Brigade, which oversaw the administration of Abu Ghraib during the period of widespread abuse, has said that C.I.A. officers, along with contract interpreters and some military-intelligence officers, did not wear uniforms when they visited the prison, and it was not clear, even to her, what they were doing there. "I thought most of the civilians there were interpreters, but there were some civilians I didn't know," she told Seymour Hersh. "I called them disappearing ghosts.... They were always bringing in somebody for interrogation, or waiting to collect somebody going out." C.I.A. officials, unlike members of the Army and the Navy, are not bound by the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which prohibits "cruelty toward, or oppression or maltreatment of" prisoners.

Walter Diaz, a military policeman, was on guard duty at Abu Ghraib the morning that Jamadi was delivered to the prison. He told me, "The O.G.A."—"other government agencies," initials commonly used to protect the identity of the C.I.A.—"would bring in people all the time to interview them. We had one wing, Tier One Alpha, reserved for the O.G.A. They'd have maybe twenty people there at a time." He went on, "They were their prisoners. They'd get into a room and lock it up. We, as soldiers, didn't get involved. We'd lock the door for them and leave. We didn't know what they were doing." But, he recalled, "we heard a lot of screaming."

Considering this level of secrecy, it's doubtful that any details would have emerged about the C.I.A.'s role in Jamadi's death had it not been for a strange and tangential chain of events. Three months after Jamadi died, Jeffrey Hopper, a Navy SEAL who had been assigned to carry out joint operations with the C.I.A. in Baghdad, was accused of stealing another SEAL's body armor. Hopper, who had been nicknamed Klepto by the unit, was expelled from the Special Forces. When he was dismissed, he told authorities that he knew of far worse offenses committed by other SEALs, and he cited the abuse of several prisoners, including Jamadi. His accusations formed the basis of multiple charges against several SEALs, which led to the court-martial of Lieutenant Andrew Ledford, the commander of the platoon that captured Jamadi, for, among other things, allowing his troops to assault the prisoner. Last May, Ledford was acquitted of any wrongdoing; but during the hearings, which were open, a number of troubling facts spilled out, hinting at the C.I.A.'s role in Jamadi's death.

Seth Hettena, an Associated Press reporter based in San Diego, California, attended the hearings. The courtroom testimony, he reported, indicated that Jamadi, before arriving at Abu Ghraib, was interrogated "in a rough manner" by a combination of SEALs and C.I.A. personnel in "the Romper Room," a tiny space in the Navy camp at Baghdad International Airport. Swanner was among those present. One of the SEALs testified that after Jamadi was handcuffed a C.I.A. interrogator rammed "his arm up against the detainee's chest, pressing on him with all his weight." According to a recent report by John McChesney on National Public Radio, a C.I.A. guard who witnessed the scene later told investigators that, after stripping Jamadi and dousing him in cold water, a C.I.A. interrogator threatened to "barbecue" him if he didn't talk. Jamadi reportedly moaned, "I'm dying, I'm dying." The interrogator replied, "You'll be wishing you were dying."

Court testimony also established that Jamadi was "body-slammed" by the SEALs into the back of a Humvee before being delivered to Abu Ghraib. During this time, he was handcuffed. "Was he a threat?" a Navy prosecutor asked one of the SEALs on trial. "No, ma'am," the SEAL conceded.

Soon after the Associated Press published Hettena's Romper Room story, two unidentified officials, evidently from the C.I.A., appeared in the courtroom. From that point on, Hettena told me, the officials, who did not give their names, protested when the testimony touched on matters sensitive to the C.I.A. In many instances, reporters and other members of the public were required to leave the courtroom. On another occasion, an unidentified C.I.A. witness testified from behind a blue curtain. Several areas of questioning by defense lawyers for the SEALs were ruled off limits. When one of the defense lawyers, Matthew Freedus, asked a witness, "What position was Jamadi in when he died?," the C.I.A. representatives protested, saying that the answer was classified. The same objection was made when a question was asked about the role that water had played in Jamadi's interrogation.

By late last spring, the SEALs' reputations had been tarnished by the exposure of their rough treatment of Jamadi, but they were cleared of the gravest abuse charges. The question of who was responsible for Jamadi's death remained unanswered. Milt Silverman, one of the defense attorneys, told me, "Who killed Jamadi? I know it wasn't any of the SEALs. . . . That's why their cases got dismissed." Frank Spinner, a civilian lawyer who represented Ledford, said, "There's a stronger case against the C.I.A. than there is against Ledford. But the military's being hung out to dry while the C.I.A. skates. I want a public accounting, whether in a trial, a hearing before a congressional committee, or a public report. There's got to be something more meaningful than sticking the case in a Justice Department drawer."

Spinner and several of the other defense lawyers learned more about the C.I.A.'s role in Jamadi's death than they were supposed to know, owing to a classification error made by the agency. The C.I.A. sent hundreds of pages of material on Jamadi's death to the Navy; much of it was classified, and all of it was marked unclassified. The pages were passed on to the civilian lawyers, who read them carefully. The agency, after realizing its mistake, demanded that the lawyers return the classified material, and subsequently sealed virtually all the court records relating to the case. Some of the C.I.A. documents, however, were seen by a source familiar with the case, who shared their contents with me.

"They're doing wonderful things with food I hate."

Manadel al-Jamadi arrived at Abu Ghraib naked from the waist down, according to an eyewitness, Jason Kenner, an M.P. with the 372nd Military Police Company. In a statement to C.I.A. investigators, Kenner recalled that Jamadi had been stripped of his pants, underpants, socks, and shoes, arriving in only a purple T-shirt and a purple jacket, and with a green plastic sandbag completely covering his head. Nevertheless, Kenner told C.I.A. investigators, "the prisoner did not appear to be in distress. He was walking fine, and his speech was normal." The plastic "flex cuffs" on Jamadi's wrists were so tight, however, that Kenner had trouble cutting them off when they were replaced with steel handcuffs and Jamadi's hands were secured behind his back.

Staff Sergeant Mark Nagy, a reservist in the 372nd Military Police Company, was also on duty at Abu Ghraib when Jamadi arrived. According to the classified internal documents, he told C.I.A. investigators that Jamadi seemed "lucid," noting that he was "talking during intake." Nagy said that Jamadi was "not combative" when he was placed in a holding cell, and that he "responded to commands." In Nagy's opinion, there was "no need to get physical with him."

Kenner told the investigators that, "minutes" after Jamadi was placed in the holding cell, an "interrogator"—later identified as Swanner—began "yelling at him, trying to find where some weapons were." Kenner said that he could see Jamadi through the open door of the holding cell, "in a seated position like a scared child." The yelling went on, he said, for five or ten minutes. At some point, Kenner said, Swanner and his translator "removed the prisoner's jacket and shirt," leaving him naked. He added that he saw no injuries or bruises. Soon afterward, the M.P.s were told by Swanner and the translator to "take the prisoner to Tier One," the agency's interrogation wing. The M.P.s dressed Jamadi in a standard-issue orange jumpsuit, keeping the sandbag over his head, and walked him to the shower room there for interrogation. Kenner said that Jamadi put up "no resistance."

On the way, Nagy noticed that Jamadi was "groaning and breathing heavily, as if he was out of breath." Walter Diaz, the M.P. who had been on guard duty at the prison, told C.I.A. investigators that Jamadi showed "no distress or complaints on the way to the shower room." But he told me that he, too, noticed that Jamadi was having "breathing problems." An autopsy showed that Jamadi had six fractured ribs; it is unclear when they were broken. The C.I.A. officials in charge of Jamadi did not give him even a cursory medical exam, although the Geneva Conventions require that prisoners receive "medical attention."

"Jamadi was basically a 'ghost prisoner,'" a former investigator on the case, who declined to be named, told me. "He wasn't checked into the facility. People like this, they just bring 'em in, and use the facility for interrogations. The lower-ranking enlisted guys there just followed the orders from O.G.A. There was no booking process."

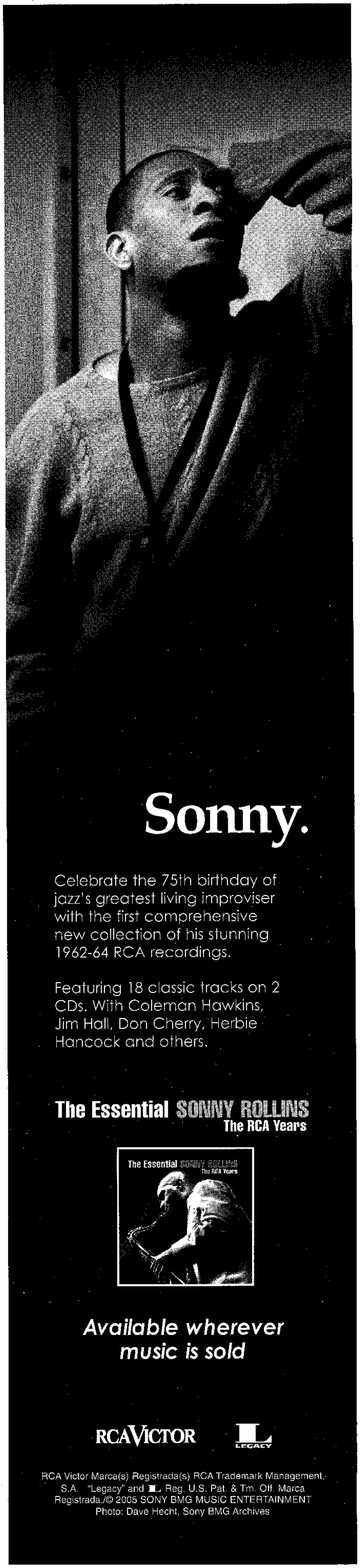
According to Kenner's testimony, when the group reached the shower room Swanner told the M.P.s that "he did not want the prisoner to sit and he wanted him shackled to the wall." (No explanation for this decision is recorded.) There was a barred window on one wall. Kenner and Nagy, using a pair of leg shackles, attached Jamadi's arms, which had been placed behind his back, to the bars on the window.

The Associated Press quoted an expert who described the position in which Jamadi died as a form of torture known as "Palestinian hanging," in which a prisoner whose hands are secured behind his back is suspended by his arms. (The technique has allegedly been used in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.) The M.P.s' sworn accounts to investigators suggest that, at least at first, Jamadi was able to stand up, without pain: autopsy records show that he was five feet ten, and, as Diaz explained to me, the window was about five feet off the ground. The accounts concur that, while Jamadi was able to stand without discomfort, he couldn't kneel or sit without hanging painfully from his arms. Once he was secured, the M.P.s left him alone in the room with Swanner and the translator.

Less than an hour later, Diaz said, he was walking past the shower room when Swanner came out and asked for help, reportedly saying, "This guy doesn't want to coöperate." According to the NPR report, one of the C.I.A. men told investigators that he called for medical help, but there is no available record of a doctor having been summoned. When Diaz entered the shower room, he said, he was surprised to see that Jamadi's knees had buckled, and that he was almost kneeling. Swanner, he said, wanted the soldiers to reposition Jamadi, so that he would have to stand more erectly. Diaz called for additional help from two other soldiers in his company, Sergeant Jeffery Frost and Dennis Stevanus. But after they had succeeded in making Jamadi stand for a moment, as requested, by hitching his handcuffs higher up the window, Jamadi collapsed again. Diaz told me, "At first I was, like, 'This guy's drunk.' He just dropped down to where his hands were, like, coming out of his handcuffs. He looked weird. I was thinking, He's got to be hurting. All of his weight was on his hands and wrists—it looked like he was about to mess up his sockets."

Swanner, whom Diaz described as a "kind of shabby-looking, overweight white guy," who was wearing black clothing, was apparently less concerned. "He was saying, 'He's just playing dead,'" Diaz recalled. "He thought he was faking. He wasn't worried at all." While Jamadi hung from his arms, Diaz told me, Swanner "just kept talking and talking at him. But there was no answer."

Frost told C.I.A. investigators that the interrogator had said that Jamadi was just "playing possum." But, as Frost lifted Jamadi upright by his jumpsuit, noticing that it was digging into his crotch, he thought, This prisoner is pretty good


Sonny.

Celebrate the 75th birthday of jazz's greatest living improviser with the first comprehensive new collection of his stunning 1962-64 RCA recordings.

Featuring 18 classic tracks on 2 CDs. With Coleman Hawkins, Jim Hall, Don Cherry, Herbie Hancock and others.

The Essential SONNY ROLLINS
The RCA Years

Available wherever music is sold

RCA VICTOR LEGACY

RCA Victor Marca(s) Registrada(s) RCA Trademark Management, S.A. "Legacy" and L Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. Marca Registrada./© 2005 SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT
Photo: Dave Hecht, Sony BMG Archives

at playing possum. When Jamadi's body went slack again, Frost recalled commenting that he "had never seen anyone's arms positioned like that, and he was surprised they didn't just pop out of their sockets."

Diaz, sensing that something was wrong, lifted Jamadi's hood. His face was badly bruised. Diaz placed a finger in front of Jamadi's open eyes, which didn't move or blink, and deduced that he was dead. When the men lowered Jamadi to the floor, Frost told investigators, "blood came gushing out of his nose and mouth, as if a faucet had been turned on."

Swanner, who had seemed so unperturbed, suddenly appeared "surprised" and "dumbfounded," according to Frost. He began talking about how Jamadi had fought and resisted the entire way to the prison. He also made calls on his cell phone. Within minutes, Diaz said, four or five additional O.G.A. officers, also dressed in black, arrived on the scene.

Dr. Steven Miles, a medical ethicist at the University of Minnesota, who is writing a study of U.S. medical practices during the war on terrorism, has examined the Jamadi incident extensively. He recently recounted to me what happened that morning: "An Iraqi medical doctor working with the C.I.A. confirmed Jamadi's death. Captain Donald Reese, the commander of Abu Ghraib M.P.s, came to the shower room and heard Colonel Thomas M. Pappas, the commander of military intelligence at the prison, say, 'I am not going down for this alone.' "

C.I.A. personnel ordered that Jamadi's body be kept in the shower room until the next morning. The corpse was packed in ice and bound with tape, apparently in an attempt to slow its decomposition and, Miles believes, to try to alter the perceived time of death. The ice was already melting when Specialist Sabrina Harman posed for pictures while stooping over Jamadi's body, smiling and giving the thumbs-up sign. The next day, a medic inserted an I.V. in Jamadi's arm, put the body on a stretcher, and took it out of the prison as if Jamadi were merely ill, so as to "not upset the other detainees." Other interrogators, Miles said, "were told that Jamadi had died of a heart attack." (There is no medical evidence that Jamadi experienced heart failure.) A military-intelligence officer later recounted that a local taxi-driver was paid to take away Jamadi's body.

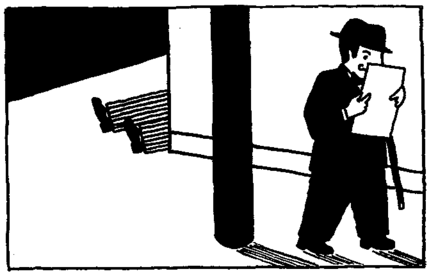
Before leaving, Frost told investigators, Swanner confided that he "did not get any information out of the prisoner." C.I.A. officials took with them the bloodied hood that had covered Jamadi's head; it was later thrown away. "They destroyed evidence, and failed to preserve the scene of the crime," Spinner, the lawyer for one of the Navy SEALs, said.

The next day, Swanner gave a statement to Army investigators, stressing that he hadn't laid a hand on Jamadi, and hadn't done anything wrong. "Clint C.," the translator, also said that Swanner hadn't beaten Jamadi. "I don't think anybody intended the guy to die," a former investigator on the case, who asked not to be identified, told me. But he believes that the decision to shackle Jamadi to the window reflected an intent to cause suffering. (Under American and international law, intent is central to assessing criminality in war-crimes and torture cases.) The C.I.A., he said, "put him in that position to get him to talk. They took it that pain equals coöperation."

The autopsy, performed by military pathologists five days later, classified Jamadi's death as a homicide, saying that the cause of death was "compromised respiration" and "blunt force injuries" to Jamadi's head and torso. But it appears that the pathologists who performed the autopsy were unaware that Jamadi had been shackled to a high window. When a description of Jamadi's position was shared with two of the country's most prominent medical examiners—both of whom volunteered to review the autopsy report free, at the request of a lawyer representing one of the SEALs—their conclusion was different. Miles, independently, concurred.

One of those examiners, Dr. Michael Baden, who is the chief forensic pathologist for the New York State Police, told me, "What struck me was that Jamadi was alive and well when he walked into the prison. The SEALs were accused of causing head injuries before he arrived, but he had no significant head injuries—certainly no brain injuries that would have caused death." Jamadi's bruises, he said, were no doubt painful, but they were not life-threatening. Baden went on, "He also had injuries to his ribs. You don't die from broken ribs. But if he had been hung up in this way *and* had broken ribs, that's different." In his judgment, "asphyxia is what he died from—as in a crucifixion." Baden, who had inspected a plastic bag of the type that was placed over Jamadi's head, said that the bag "could have impaired his breath, but he couldn't have died from that alone." Of greater concern, he thought, was Jamadi's position. "If his hands were pulled up five feet—that's to his neck. That's pretty tough. That would put a lot of tension on his rib muscles, which are needed for breathing. It's not only painful—it can hinder the diaphragm from going up and down, and the rib cage from expanding. The muscles tire, and the breathing function is impaired, so there's less oxygen entering the bloodstream." A person in such a state would first lose consciousness, he said, and eventually would die. The hood, he suggested, would likely have compounded the problem, because the interrogators "can't see his face if he's turning blue. We see a lot about a patient's condition by looking at his face. By putting that goddam hood on, they can't see if he's conscious." It also "doesn't permit them to know when he died." The bottom line, Baden said, is that Jamadi "didn't die as a result of any injury he got before getting to the prison."

Dr. Cyril Wecht, a medical doctor and a lawyer who is the coroner of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and a former president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, independently reached the same conclusion. The interpretation put forward by the military pathologists, he said, "didn't fit with their own report. They said he died of blunt-force trauma, yet there was no significant evidence of trauma to the head." Instead, Wecht believes that Jamadi "died of compromised respiration," and that "the position the body was in would have been the cause of death." He added, "Mind you, I'm not a critic of the Iraq war. But I don't think we should reduce ourselves to the insurgents' barbaric levels."



Walter Diaz told me, "Someone should be charged. If Jamadi was already handcuffed, there was no reason to treat the guy the way they did—the way they hung him." Diaz said he didn't know if Swanner had intended to torture Jamadi, or whether the death was accidental. But he was troubled by the government's inaction, and by what he saw as the agency's attempt at a coverup. "They tried to blame the SEALs. The C.I.A. had a big role in this. But you know the C.I.A.—who's going to go against them?"

According to Jeffrey Smith, the former general counsel of the C.I.A., now a private-practice lawyer who handles national-security cases, a decision to prosecute Swanner "would probably go all the way up to the Attorney General." Critics of the Administration, such as John Sifton, a lawyer for Human Rights Watch, question whether Alberto Gonzales, who became Attorney General last year, has too many conflicts of interest to weigh the case against Swanner fairly. Sifton said, "It's hard to imagine the current leadership pursuing these guys, because the head of the Justice Department, Alberto Gonzales, is centrally implicated in crafting the policies that led to the abuse." He suggested that the prudent thing for Gonzales to do would be to "recuse himself from such a decision, and leave it to a deputy, or a career officer."

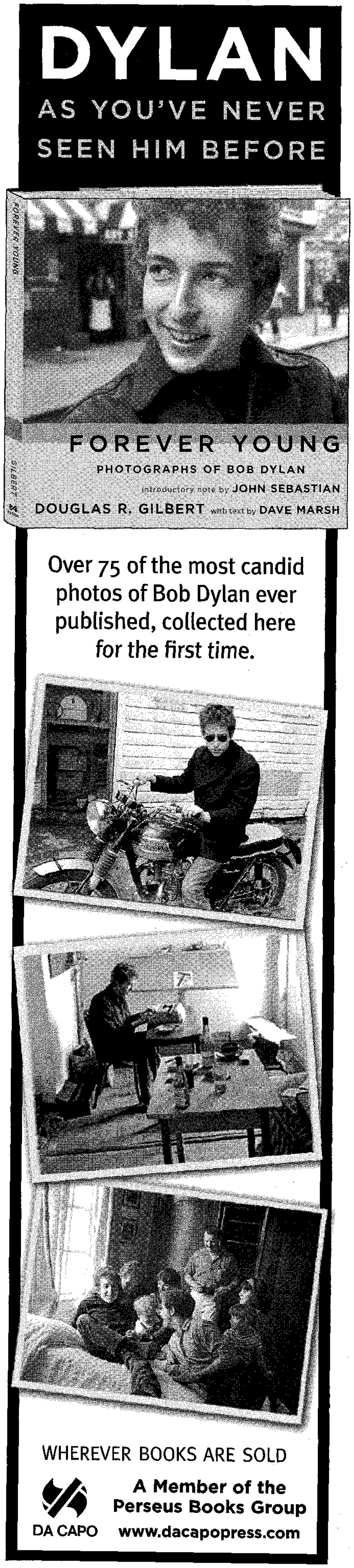
But there are political conflicts here, too. It is in the office of Paul McNulty—whose nomination to become Gonzales's deputy will soon be presented to Congress, and who was a Republican congressional staff member before being named a U.S. Attorney—that the Jamadi case has stalled. And Alice Fisher, the new head of the Justice Department's criminal division, got that job only under a recess appointment; during her confirmation hearings, Fisher, who previously handled counter-terrorism cases for the department, refused to provide all the information requested about her knowledge of C.I.A. prisoner abuse, and Congress did not approve her nomination.

Even more troubling is the possibility that, under the Bush Administration's secret interrogation guidelines, the killing of Jamadi might not have broken any laws. Jeffrey Smith says it's possible that the Office of Legal Counsel's memos may have opened too many loopholes for interrogators like Swanner, "making prosecution somehow too hard to do." Smith added, "But, even under the expanded definition of torture, I don't see how someone beaten with his hands bound, who then died while hanging—how that could be legal. I'd be embarrassed if anyone argued that it was."

Senator Richard Durbin, a Democrat from Illinois, served on the Senate Intelligence Committee until January. Before his tenure ended, he looked at the full, classified set of photographs from Abu Ghraib. In a recent interview at his office in the Capitol, he said, "You can't imagine what it's like to go to a closed room where you have a classified briefing, and stand shoulder to shoulder with your colleagues in the Senate, and see hundreds and hundreds of slides like those of Abu Ghraib, most of which have never been publicly disclosed. I had a sick feeling when I left." He went on, "It was then that I began to have suspicions that something significant was happening at the highest levels of the government when it came to torture policy."

Since then, Durbin has been trying to close the loopholes that allow government personnel to engage in brutal interrogations. Last year, he introduced an amendment to the defense-authorization bill affirming that the C.I.A. was covered by U.S. laws forbidding torture and the cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of prisoners. But his effort met intense resistance from the Bush Administration, and the amendment did not pass. Durbin tried other legislative stratagems, without much success. Eventually, John McCain took up Durbin's cause—which led to last month's confrontation with Cheney and Goss. The Abu Ghraib scandal seems not to have chastened Cheney or any other Administration officials; in fact, they are for the first time arguing openly and explicitly that C.I.A. personnel should be exempt from standards that apply to every other American.

"I'm concerned that the government isn't going forward on these prosecutions," Durbin said of the C.I.A. cases. "It's really hard to follow the Administration's policies here. I think the world was very simple before 9/11. We knew what the law was, and I understood it to apply to everyone in the government. Now there's real uncertainty. There's a shadow over our nation that needs lifting." ♦


DYLAN
AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE

FOREVER YOUNG
PHOTOGRAPHS OF BOB DYLAN
introductory note by JOHN SEBASTIAN
DOUGLAS R. GILBERT with text by DAVE MARSH

Over 75 of the most candid photos of Bob Dylan ever published, collected here for the first time.

WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD
DA CAPO
A Member of the Perseus Books Group
www.dacapopress.com

The fastest way to learn a language. Guaranteed.™

Award-winning software successfully used by Fortune 500® executives, U.S. State Department diplomats, and millions of people worldwide.

Finally, a different approach that has millions of people talking. Using the award-winning Dynamic Immersion™ method, our interactive software teaches without translation, memorization or grammar drills. Combining thousands of real-life images and the voices of native speakers in a step-by-step immersion process, our programs successfully replicate the experience of learning your first language. Guaranteed to teach faster and easier than any other language product or your money back. No questions asked.

Rosetta Stone is available for learning:
Arabic • Chinese • Danish • Dutch • English • Farsi
French • German • Greek • Hebrew • Hindi
Indonesian • Italian • Japanese • Korean • Latin
Pashto • Polish • Portuguese • Russian • Spanish
Swahili • Swedish • Thai • Turkish • Vietnamese • Welsh

SAVE 10%

Level 1 CD-ROM ...... ~~$195~~ **$175.50**
Level 2 CD-ROM ...... ~~$225~~ **$202.50**
BEST VALUE!
Level 1 & 2 Set .... ~~$329~~ **$296.10**

Call today or buy online for a 10% discount.
RosettaStone.com/nys115
1-800-788-5141
Use promotional code nys115 when ordering.

Give the gift they'll talk about all year!

RosettaStone Language Learning Success Unwrap the World

THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Why the Democrats are moving toward compromise.

BY PETER J. BOYER

As Democrats regrouped after last year's elections, Senator Charles Schumer, of New York, the chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, took up the task of preventing further Republican gains in 2006. The Democrats' cause had been reduced to forty-five votes in the Senate, the Party's smallest share in more than sixty years; losing just a few additional seats would give Republicans a filibuster-proof majority.

Schumer had to find money for Democratic incumbents whose seats were at risk and to recruit and fund candidates who might be capable of defeating targeted Republicans. Last winter, as he got started, he almost immediately identified the prize he most coveted. "Both on the substance and on the politics," Schumer recalls, "when we sat down and looked at the map we said our No. 1 take-back seat would be Pennsylvania"—the seat now held by the state's junior senator, Rick Santorum. A fiercely partisan religious conservative, Santorum is to the Democrats the very embodiment of the scary right; his aspirations for national office only heighten the allure of defeating him.

Schumer solicited the advice of Edward G. Rendell, the governor of Pennsylvania and the former head of the national Party: "I said, 'Governor, who can beat Santorum? Is he vulnerable, and who can beat him?' "

Rendell had already gamed out the field. "There's only one guy who can beat him," Rendell said, according to Schumer. "But he doesn't want to run, and you guys wouldn't want him even if he did."

"If he could win, why wouldn't we want him?"

"Well, he's not pro-choice."

Rendell's ideal candidate was Robert Casey, Jr., who had just been elected state treasurer, receiving the largest number of votes in Pennsylvania's history. Rendell did not need to explain why Casey might have been hesitant to run for any office that required the acquiescence of the national Party. Schumer knew what had happened at the 1992 Democratic National Convention, in New York City.

Casey is a legacy politician in Pennsylvania, the son of Robert P. Casey, Sr., who for most of thirty-five years, starting in the early nineteen-sixties, seemed always to be running for one statewide office or another. The senior Casey was an Irish Democrat pol of the old school, the son and grandson of miners, who championed labor and believed in government as a beneficent force. In a state that reveres deer-hunting, he was gun-friendly. He was also pro-life.

In 1992, Casey was at the summit of his political career. He had won a second term as governor by carrying all but one of Pennsylvania's sixty-seven counties. His programs had forced insurance companies to pay for mammograms for middle-aged women, and had brought full-day child-care services to working parents and health insurance to children whose parents were above the poverty line but too poor to pay medical bills. But Casey was at least equally well known as the defendant in a legal case that had gone to the United States Supreme Court. In his first term, he had fostered and signed into law the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act, which placed significant limitations on abortion, including the notification of parents of minors, a twenty-four-hour waiting period, and a ban on partial-birth procedures except in cases of risk to the mother's life. Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania sued the state, with Casey as the named defendant, asserting that several provisions of the law violated the right to privacy established by Roe v. Wade. The case made its way to the Supreme Court, which heard arguments in April, 1992—occasioning an enormous pro-choice march in Washington. The Court decided Planned Parenthood v. Casey on June 29th, upholding all of Pennsylvania's contested restrictions but one (a requirement for spousal notification) and affirming the right of states to restrict abortions.

Two weeks later, the Democratic Convention began. As the head of the Pennsylvania delegation, Casey hoped to make a grand gesture from the podium on behalf of the pro-life position. He imagined himself in the role of passionate dissenter, as the young Hubert Humphrey had been when he spoke for civil rights at the 1948 Convention. Casey had written to Ron Brown, the chairman of the national Party, asking for the chance to share his often expressed view that "young mothers and their children were the natural constituency of the Party," and that "abortion-on-demand was no solution," for women or for the Party. But Casey had chosen the wrong occasion for speaking out. Democrats had been out of power for a dozen years, and, sensing victory with Bill Clinton (who had not received Casey's endorsement), they staged the most disciplined Convention in Party history. Dissent on any subject—especially on the Party's core position on choice—was strictly written out of the program. Brown never responded to Casey's request. At the Convention, Casey presented another plea, in a letter hand-delivered to Ann Richards, the Convention's chairwoman. She didn't respond directly, either. Instead, Casey was copied on a letter from a Convention parliamentarian to the Party's general counsel, denying Casey's request. ("The kind of letter they might have sent Lyndon LaRouche," he later observed.)

Denied the podium, Casey watched as a succession of speakers pronounced themselves pro-choice, to lively applause. Among them were six Republican women, who had been invited by the National Abortion Rights Action League, or NARAL. One had actively worked for Casey's Republican opponent in his last campaign. On the Convention's final night, the gathering was invited to join hands and sing "Circle of Friends" ("Let's join a circle of friends, one that begins and never ends"). Casey and his family, consigned to seats in the far reaches of Madison Square Garden, declined to join in. Casey turned to his wife, Ellen, and said, "Let's remember this moment. One day, it's all going to come back around."

Twelve years later, Casey was dead, Democrats were a minority in Congress, a pro-life evangelical lived in the White House, and Robert Casey, Jr., was being proposed as the Party's best chance in its marquee senatorial contest. Schumer studied the 2004 election results in Pennsylvania, and was impressed. The younger Casey—known as Bobby in Pennsylvania political circles—had won his treasurer's race by some 1.3 million votes, four hundred thousand more than John Kerry received there. Furthermore, Casey won not only in conservative precincts of the state but also in pro-choice, pro-gun-control Philadelphia.

Schumer told Rendell that he was backing Casey, and that Rendell should do all he could to clear the field of other candidates. "I said, 'Ed, look, we have forty-five seats in the Senate—our backs are against the wall,'" Schumer recalls. "And if we go down to forty-two seats it's over. The very hard right will run America. We can't afford to play games anymore. This is tough stuff. Democrats have to be a bigger-tent Party. And the day should be over when a potential candidate has to check twenty-seven boxes before we support him. Maybe if we had sixty-five seats we could afford to do that. But we don't."

Bobby Casey grew up in Democratic politics, and he was at his father's side in Madison Square Garden in 1992. "He had just been reëlected by over a million votes," he told me. "It was a mistake not to let him speak."

In Pennsylvania, Rick Santorum will face the pro-life Democrat Robert Casey, Jr.

DANIEL ADEL

Some Party leaders tried to make amends. The day after the Convention, Al Gore telephoned the senior Casey and explained that neither he nor Clinton had been responsible for the banishment. After Casey died, in 2000, Gore invited Bobby and his brother Pat, a lawyer who is also involved in Pennsylvania politics, to address that summer's Convention and to present a video tribute to their father. "I thought that was a very important gesture," Casey says. "I think it symbolized a journey that the Party had travelled just in eight years."

Still, Schumer says, when he and Rendell urged Bobby Casey to challenge Santorum, Casey hesitated. He was his father's son regarding abortion, and NARAL had campaigned against him in the past;

"So we figured why explore Mars when, closer to home, there's still so much we don't know about the Petersens."

he knew that, without the pro-choice activists supporting him, money would be an issue against the well-financed incumbent. "He was very concerned that someone of his view could not get support from Democrats," Schumer says.

There was another complication. Emily's List, the pro-choice advocacy group that funds and helps to coördinate campaigns for Democratic women, had already chosen a candidate for the race—a veteran statewide campaigner named Barbara Hafer, Casey's predecessor as state treasurer. Emily's List, which spent twenty-six million dollars on pro-choice candidates in 2004, had been working with Hafer for several months; after Hafer announced her candidacy, in February, Emily's List dispatched a pair of staffers to Pennsylvania to help set up her campaign. When Casey made it clear that he didn't want a primary fight, against Hafer or anyone else, Rendell asked Hafer to withdraw. "The Governor called and said, 'Look, Bob wants to do this, and I'm being called by Chuck Schumer,'" Hafer says. "I guess Bobby Casey just had more gravitas than I did." Hafer withdrew from the race on March 4th, and Casey announced his candidacy that day.

Abortion-rights activists and feminist groups, Schumer's customary allies, were dismayed. With the backing of Eleanor Smeal, Gloria Steinem, and other longtime feminists, Kim Gandy, the head of the National Organization for Women, sent out a mass e-mail to supporters:

> Who did top Democrats pick to run against Santorum, one of the leading anti-abortion, anti-women's rights and anti-gay senators? . . . Robert P. Casey Jr., a staunch abortion opponent in the mold of his father, the late Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey Sr. You may recognize his name from the 1992 Supreme Court case of Casey v. Planned Parenthood. . . . Don't mistake this for a random act—it is a calculated effort by Party leaders to build a so-called "bigger tent" at the expense of women's rights. . . . We must let the Democrats know that women will no longer be taken for granted: When Democrats do not support women, we will not support *them*.
>
> Please also forward this message to as many of your friends and family as possible. We must send a constant stream of e-mail petitions flowing to the Democratic leaders—perhaps they have forgotten about the power of women's votes and the gender gap, but we have not.

Schumer had several long, angry conversations with his old friend Kate Michelman, the former president of NARAL, and found himself reminding her and others of his own abortion-rights record. He brought Casey to Washington and assured his colleagues that Casey as senator would vote the right way on President Bush's judicial nominees. "There's no worry on judges," Schumer says. "And judges is the whole ball of wax." In these conversations, Schumer's clincher was the polling data from Pennsylvania. One Quinnipiac University poll showed Hafer trailing Santorum by eight points; the same poll showed Casey ahead of Santorum by five. "The bottom line for them is they want to win Senate races," Karen White, the national political director for Emily's List, who was one of those lobbied by Schumer, says. "Chuck Schumer, in his first term as head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, wants to walk away from 2006 with four Senate races under his belt."

For White and other pro-choice activists, Democratic talk of a big tent was becoming alarmingly familiar as the Party dealt with what amounted to a case of "values" shock—the post-election impression that Democrats keep losing because they have lost touch with mainstream American values. A month after conceding the election to Bush last year, John Kerry stopped in at a meeting of America Votes, a coalition of progressive activist groups. Kerry said that the Party needed to rethink how it presented itself to voters on issues like abortion, and that pro-life Democrats should be embraced. "People in the room openly disagreed," White recalls. "You don't just throw out words or issues to come up with an excuse for why you lost." Her group then commissioned a study showing that abortion wasn't the reason Kerry lost.

But Kerry's larger point was hard to refute. The Democrats' pro-choice position had come to be perceived as pro-abortion. Most Americans favor legal abortion, but with reservations; the vast majority favor some restrictions on the procedure. Democrats are seen as the abortion-on-demand party because of the strategies employed in the political wars between pro-life and pro-choice advocates. After Roe v. Wade, abortion opponents eventually settled on the strategy of constricting abortion incrementally, focussing on such issues as parental notification, informed consent, and partial-birth abortions. This forced the pro-choice side, fearing the slippery slope, to oppose any and all restrictions on a woman's right to choose to have an abortion, as established by Roe. Without a Supreme Court reversal, or a constitutional ban on abortion—neither very likely—these strategies guaranteed the abortion issue a lasting place in American politics, a chronic low-grade

Some Feat.

Paul Taylor's feet. Photo © Robert Rauschenberg/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

In celebration of the **Paul Taylor Dance Company**'s 50th Anniversary, the Taylor Company and **Taylor 2** performed Mr. Taylor's dances in more than 100 cities and towns in an unprecedented 50-State Tour. While audiences roared their appreciation, Vanity Fair hailed Mr. Taylor as "the greatest choreographer in the world" and the New York Observer said, "The Paul Taylor company now represents the best New York has to offer in dance." Next, a three-week season at **New York City Center, February 28—March 19, 2006**. To commission a dance by Paul Taylor — or to contribute to the success of the next 50 years — please call Executive Director Wallace Chappell, 212.431.5562.

PAUL TAYLOR
DANCE COMPANY

The Next 50 Years of Greatness Begins!

www.paultaylor.org

State of the Arts NYSCA

MetLife Foundation
50th Anniversary National Tour Sponsor

Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Philanthropy for an Interdependent World

2006 SEASON SPONSOR
TimeWarner

Altria
50th Anniversary Celebration Sponsor

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fever that afflicted Democrats more than Republicans. In the years after Roe, pro-choice forces gradually became the Democrats' most important, and insistent, interest sector, raising money and turning out votes and, accordingly, gaining greater influence over the Party's positions.

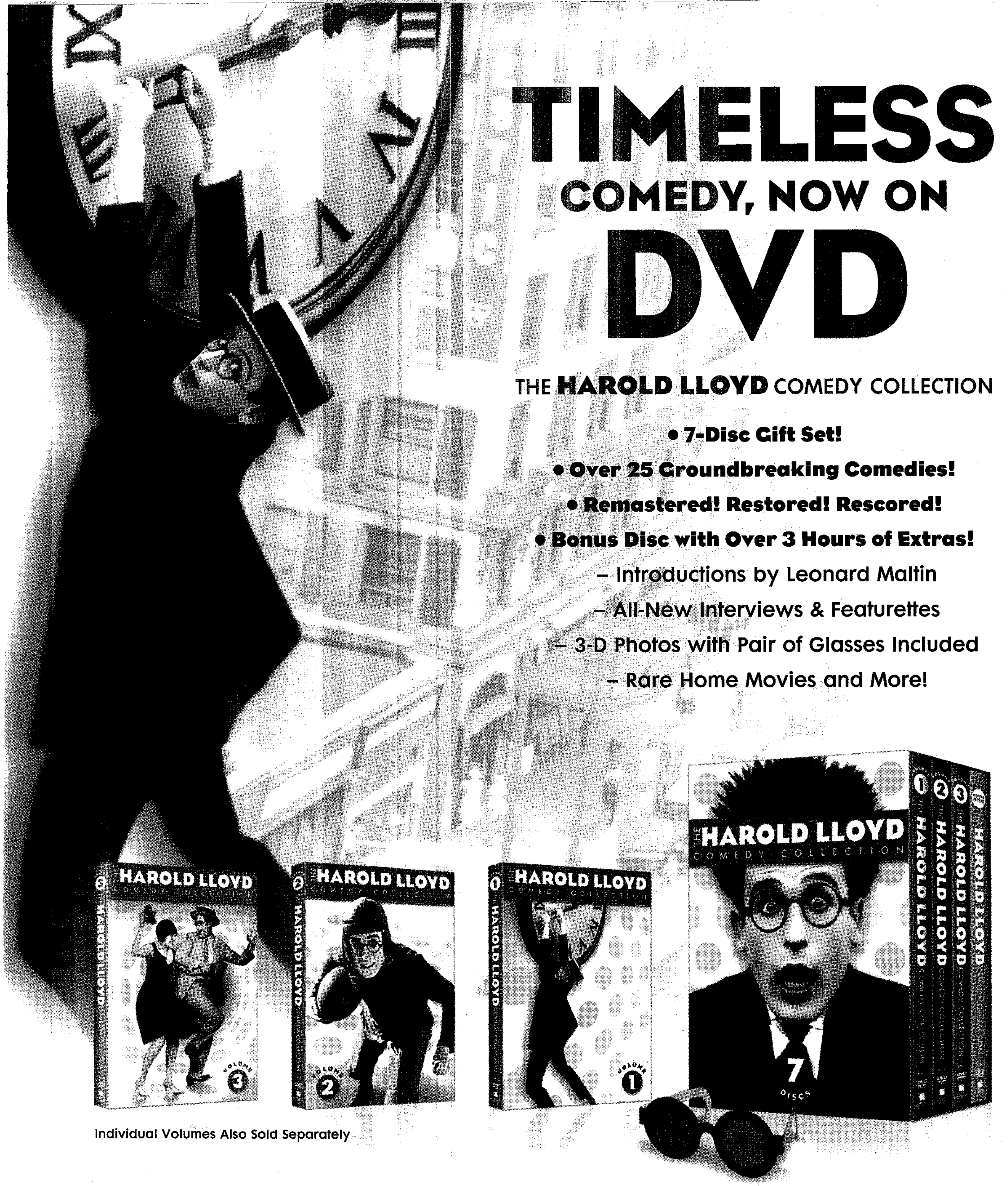
In 1976, the first Presidential election year after the Roe decision, the Democratic platform opposed a constitutional ban on abortion, but also included the statement "We fully realize the religious and ethical nature of the concerns which many Americans have on the subject of abortion." Jimmy Carter was nominated by that year's Convention, and became the last Democrat to win a voter majority. Carter, a Southerner and a born-again Christian, was pro-choice but opposed government funding of abortion. In time, the abortion-rights wing gained influence, and the Party adopted a position of supporting government funding of abortions. The Democratic line grew gradually more rigid and its tone less subtle, until it sounded something like an applause line. (Last year's platform stated, "We stand proudly for a woman's right to choose.") The Democratic strategist Paul Begala, who worked for the senior Casey, says, "Somehow, we moved from Carter, who was really pro-choice but very much sensitive to the tragedy, to now, where we're dancing in the aisles about it."

Democratic politicians felt such little leeway on the subject that the ranks of dissidents inevitably thinned. "When you're running for statewide office as a Democrat, and you're talking with people and trying to raise money, there's no doubt that, if you take a view different from the choice community on abortion, you have a lot of explaining to do," says Bill Ritter, the pro-life former district attorney of Denver, who is running for governor of Colorado. Prominent state Democrats have been slow to endorse Ritter, even though he is the only Democrat in the race. At the time of Roe, nearly half the Democrats in Congress were pro-life; now there are some thirty pro-life Democrats in the House and fewer than half a dozen in the Senate. Tim Roemer, a pro-life former Democratic congressman from Indiana, blames what he calls the Party's pro-choice "litmus test" for steady Democratic losses in the South, the West, and the Midwest. "Instead of having pro-life Democrats who would vote for a Democratic Speaker and vote for programs to help the poor, you replace them with Republicans who went far, far to the conservative, Falwell-Robertson right," Roemer says.

"Psst. Is everyone still mad at me?"

Democratic officeholders find themselves expected to vote against even those abortion restrictions that most of their constituents consider reasonable. No one knows this better than John Kerry, a Roman Catholic who found himself professing his belief that life begins at conception, even while defending his vote against a ban on partial-birth abortion. "Look at the 2004 Presidential primaries," Begala says. "Nine candidates. All of them not only embraced the right to legal abortion; they embraced legal so-called partial-birth abortion—including folks like Kucinich and Gephardt, who'd voted to ban partial-birth abortion. Kucinich had an unblemished pro-life record until five minutes before he started to run for President."

What galls Democrats like Tim Roemer is that, even though the Republican core is as doctrinaire on abortion as the Democratic base is, Republicans have managed to create an impression of tolerance for differing opinions within the Party. "As the nineteen-nineties progressed, the Republicans, at least symbolically, became more of the big-tent party, with pro-choice governors, mayors, people like Giuliani and Schwarzenegger, highlighting their versatility on this issue," Roemer says. "The Democratic Party veered toward putting the flaps down on the tent. They're steered more by some of these special-interest groups, and, not being able to elect some of the pro-life Democrats in districts, we lost to Republicans." Roemer speaks from unhappy experience. A few weeks after Kerry gave his talk to America Votes, and as Schumer was trying to sell Party activists on the idea of the pro-life Casey, Roemer launched a campaign to become chairman of the Democratic National Committee. He ran on a platform of national security (he had served on the 9/11 Commission), tolerance of differing views on abortion, and a return to traditional Democratic values. He pointed to the fact that Democrats had lost ninety-six of the hundred fastest-growing counties in the nation—an unpromising trend for a party trying to regain majority status. Roemer was vigorously opposed by pro-choice activists, who lined up behind Howard Dean's successful candidacy. "I had some pretty piercing and nasty opposition research done on me in the D.N.C. race that I don't think the Republicans had


HAROLD LLOYD
COMEDY COLLECTION
VOLUME 3
VOLUME 2
VOLUME 1
THE HAROLD LLOYD
COMEDY COLLECTION
7 DISCS

TIMELESS
COMEDY, NOW ON
DVD

THE **HAROLD LLOYD** COMEDY COLLECTION

- **7-Disc Gift Set!**
- **Over 25 Groundbreaking Comedies!**
- **Remastered! Restored! Rescored!**
- **Bonus Disc with Over 3 Hours of Extras!**
  - Introductions by Leonard Maltin
  - All-New Interviews & Featurettes
  - 3-D Photos with Pair of Glasses Included
  - Rare Home Movies and More!

Individual Volumes Also Sold Separately

OWN THE LAUGHS ON DVD NOVEMBER 15, 2005

NEW LINE
HOME ENTERTAINMENT
A TimeWarner Company
www.newline.com
© MMV New Line Home Entertainment, Inc.

**WATCH TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES' TRIBUTE TO
HAROLD LLOYD ON NOVEMBER 20TH AT 8PM (ET)**

TURNER CLASSIC TCM MOVIES

done quite so well in my six races for the House of Representatives," Roemer says.

But the last election prompted even some pro-choice activists to begin to reconsider the absolutist strategy. In an influential essay published last November, Frances Kissling, a co-founder of the National Abortion Federation and the longtime head of Catholics for a Free Choice, allowed that the abortion-rights movement's focus on a woman's right to choose has come at the cost of a seeming indifference to the value of fetal life. "I am deeply struck by the number of thoughtful, progressive people," she wrote, "who have been turned off to the pro-choice movement by the lack of adequate and clear expressions of respect for fetal life, people who are themselves grappling with the conflict between upholding women's rights and the right to conscience and respecting the value of nascent human life." Noting the movement's inability "to express any doubt about any aspect of abortion," Kissling proposed that "we would do well as pro-choice people to present abortion as a complex issue that involves loss—and to be saddened by that loss at the same time as we affirm and support women's decisions to end pregnancies. Is there not a way to simply say, 'Yes, it is sad, unfortunate, tragic (or whatever word you are comfortable with) that this life could not come to fruition'?"

Two months later, Hillary Rodham Clinton met with the annual conference of Family Planning Advocates of New York State. "We can all recognize that abortion in many ways represents a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women," Mrs. Clinton said. Regarding those who oppose abortion, she said, "I, for one, respect those who believe with all their hearts and conscience that there are no circumstances under which any abortion should ever be available."

If there is a place that describes Democratic disappointment, and the Party's motivation for adjusting its image, it is Cambria County, in the rolling Allegheny landscapes of western Pennsylvania. Its main city is Johnstown, which was made and broken by the Rust Belt industries of coal and steel. "This place is seventy per cent Roman Catholic, ninety per cent Democrat, and a hundred per cent union," Craig Ford, a local banker, says. That may be an exaggeration, but at Ford's bank even the tellers belong to a union—the United Steelworkers. Cambria County is a place where people hunt deer and send their sons into military service, but register as Democrats. They could be called Reagan Democrats, except that these Democrats didn't vote for Reagan. Registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by a two-to-one margin. But in the 2004 election Cambria County went for Bush, in what may have been the biggest party crossover vote in the nation; it was the first time the county had voted Republican in a Presidential contest in more than thirty years.

It was voters like those in Cambria County, where unemployment is high and near-term prospects for recovery are low, who most frustrated Democrats, because they seemed to be voting against their own interests. Bob Kerrey, the former Democratic senator from Nebraska, believes that the Party lost Main Street by allowing itself to be identified so vividly as the antiwar, anti-gun, pro-abortion party. "They no longer trusted our values," he says. "They thought our values were different. They thought we were disdainful of their patriotism, of their religion, of their orientation in their community."

Charles Schumer believes that Robert Casey, Jr., is a remedy for that problem, at least in Pennsylvania. The strategy is uncomplicated: Casey's positions on guns and abortion, it is hoped, will neutralize Santorum's edge in those parts of the state which vote according to traditional values, allowing him to draw distinctions with Santorum on issues that favor Democrats, such as Social Security. Barbara Hafer, who was pressed out of the race to make way for Casey, concedes, "The strategy is correct—the issue of choice is neutralized, and other issues will come forward."

Hafer is able to view the race, despite her own disappointment, with the detached, almost amused air of one who has seen much in Pennsylvania politics, and from nearly every perspective. Now in her sixties, she was for thirty years a pro-choice Republican, and an abiding presence in the commonwealth's electoral politics. A former nurse, she was twice elected state treasurer and served two terms as state auditor general (a position also held by both Caseys). In 1990, she was the Republican gubernatorial candidate, trying to unseat the incumbent, Robert Casey, Sr. (It was a supporter of Hafer's, Kathy Taylor, whose speech at the 1992 Democratic Convention had so chagrined Governor Casey.) Three years ago, Hafer endorsed the Democrat Rendell for governor, and shortly thereafter she became a Democrat herself, joining a party in which, at last, her pro-choice position was not the minority view. With Rendell's encouragement, she began to eye the Santorum race. When the Democrats decided that what they needed was Casey, an abortion opponent, she was, of course, skeptical of the strategy. "I didn't initially think that the taking away of the choice issue would work the way it's worked," she says. "But Bob's numbers are great." She says she's now convinced that Casey can win.

The strategy was on display one evening late this summer, when Casey travelled to Johnstown to mingle with voters at a large annual picnic, held at a hardscrabble park overlooking an urban ravine. After a band played Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A.," the locals drank beer as Casey recited his stump speech, a generalized critique of the ways in which Republicans in Washington have failed average Pennsylvanians. He said that Santorum had voted for tax breaks for the wealthy, while serving as point man for President Bush's "scheme" to undermine Social Security. (Pennsylvania has the country's third-highest percentage of old people.) Lean and balding, with his father's dark beetle brows, Casey is an unimposing presence, and his campaign style is not dynamic; his handlers hope that he will contrast well with Santorum's more heated displays.

Casey doesn't volunteer his positions on abortion and guns, as his father might have, but in Pennsylvania the Casey view on abortion is a given. When prompted on the so-called life issues, Casey does not equivocate: he will vote to limit abortion. When asked about the medical possibilities of embryonic-stem-cell research, Casey, the father of four daughters, says,

NO ONE'S CENSORING HER NOW

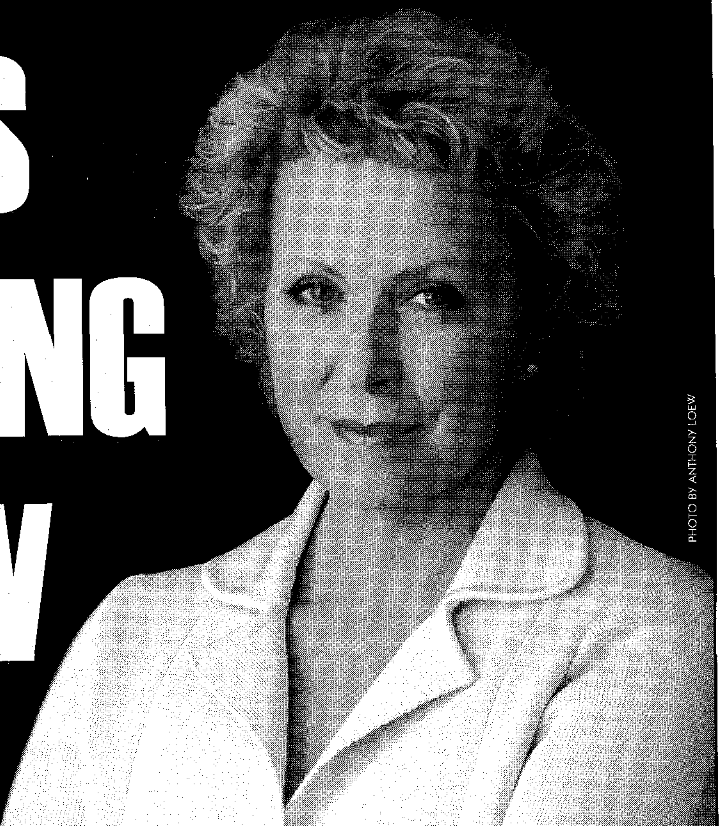
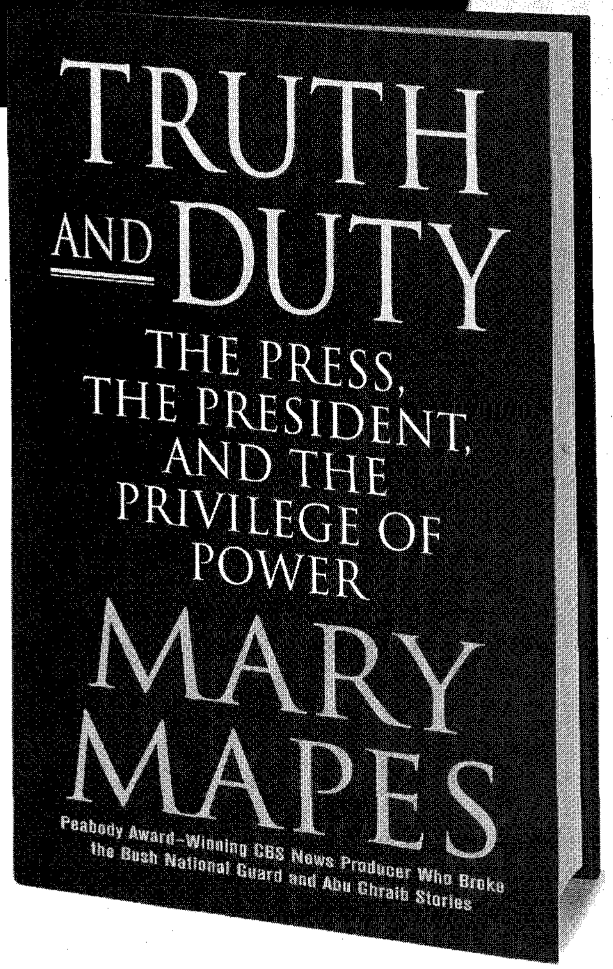


PHOTO BY ANTHONY LOEW


TRUTH AND DUTY
THE PRESS, THE PRESIDENT, AND THE PRIVILEGE OF POWER
MARY MAPES
Peabody Award-Winning CBS News Producer Who Broke the Bush National Guard and Abu Ghraib Stories

Get the clear, unedited picture of the biggest news stories in the run-up to the 2004 election. Bush and the National Guard. Abu Ghraib. You are given unfettered access to the CBS newsrooms by Mary Mapes, a Peabody Award-winning producer who believes you have the right to know the truth.

St. Martin's Press
www.stmartins.com
www.truthandduty.com

THE
NEW YORKER
ONLINE

newyorker.com

THIS WEEK'S WEB EXCLUSIVE:

Atul Gawande talks about the costs and consequences of medical malpractice.

THE HARD DRIVE
An archive of hundreds of past Web exclusives, including Q. & A.s, cover galleries, slide shows, Web sightings, and more.

THE FILM FILE
A decade's worth of New Yorker Film Notes.

EVENTS
A calendar of New Yorker events across the country.

NOW ONLINE:
THE NEW YORKER'S AUDIO EDITION, AVAILABLE AT AUDIBLE.COM/NEWYORKER

“My father suffered from familial amyloidosis”—a hereditary disease—“which killed him. I understand what those families go through, and how they feel a sense of hopelessness about cures and finding cures for diseases. And that's why I support embryonic-stem-cell research in cases where you don't destroy the embryo. And I think there are an awful lot of promising scientific techniques now that will allow us to have the benefits of embryonic-stem-cell research. But I don't think we should be destroying embryos to do that.”

“You'll kick his ass,” one supporter assured Casey, patting him on the back. Asked to expand his analysis, the Casey advocate, a deputy sheriff named Bob Tutko, explained, “He walks on water here. This time, we've got a candidate on the Democratic side that is pro-life.”

John Brabender, a consultant to Rick Santorum's reëlection campaign, allows that “in the western part of the state there's a large group of Reagan Democrats who often swing their votes to Republicans, based on two issues: guns and abortion.” But neutralizing those issues may also work in Santorum's favor, Brabender suggests, in allowing Casey to be depicted on other issues as a “traditional tax-and-spend Democrat.” (Santorum declined to discuss the race, because, according to Brabender, “he doesn't want to be in the position of playing political analyst in his own race, or to render opinion on his opponent.”)

The key question for Casey is whether he can excite the enthusiasm of Party activists in the metropolitan centers of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. “That's where the money's been raised, in the pro-choice, progressive community,” Barbara Hafer says. “So where do *they* go? Is everybody going to sit on their hands? It'll be very interesting.” Paul Begala, who is expected to join Casey's campaign, knows the difficulties in bucking Party orthodoxy. Begala managed Harris Wofford's 1991 Senate campaign. As a member of the senior Casey's cabinet, Wofford had supported the Abortion Control Act. “We had the hardest time raising money,” Begala says, “because even having the slightest deviation was lethal.” In 1994, Wofford lost to Rick Santorum.

Despite Schumer's assurances that “there's no worry on judges,” Casey says that he would have voted to confirm John Roberts as Chief Justice of the United States. “I don't think that when you're voting for a judicial nominee you should impose any litmus test on that nominee,” he told me.

Casey has not yet revealed his view of President Bush's latest Supreme Court choice, Judge Samuel A. Alito, Jr., but the nomination has provided a new reminder of the lasting place the name Casey has in abortion politics. In a 1991 opinion rendered in Planned Parenthood v. Casey, Alito, who was a new member of the federal appellate court at the time, voted with his colleagues in upholding most of Pennsylvania's restrictions on abortion, but he dissented from the court's holding that one provision of the law, which required a woman to notify her spouse before undergoing an abortion, presented women with an “undue burden.”

Governor Casey had drafted the provision carefully, in light of the Supreme Court's reasoning on undue burden in earlier cases, and Alito observed in his dissent that only twenty to thirty per cent of women seeking abortions were married, and that ninety-five per cent of them notified their husbands; he also noted that the Pennsylvania law eased the burden of notification by granting exceptions—for instance, in those cases in which a woman feared harm might result from informing her spouse of her intention. In the heat of confirmation debate, that history was distilled down to talking points, and the Casey decision again became a hot button.

Bobby Casey has been dispatched to meet with hesitant potential donors, including many pro-choice activists, to persuade them that he's a safe investment. Many were not wholly convinced. “There are things he won't be good on,” Elizabeth Werthan, a progressive Democratic activist in Philadelphia, said. “We don't know all of it, but we know some of it. It's abortion, it's gun control—he's already got a record on gun control, and he's not changing anything he said. That was a very bitter pill for a lot of folks who are more progressive. I mean, he just wouldn't split the middle. He would not move.”

Werthan said that although Casey promised to buck Church teaching on contraceptives and support birth-control programs, he remained adamantly opposed to most embryonic-stem-cell research. "The sacred embryo," Werthan mused. "I still don't get it."

But, among such potential supporters, Casey's cause is helped immeasurably by the profile of his opponent. It has been an awkward early campaign season for Santorum, starting with his book, "It Takes a Family," which argues the case for traditional family values by seeming to take shots at working mothers. ("For some parents, the purported need to provide *things* for their children simply provides a convenient rationalization for pursuing a gratifying career outside the home," he wrote.) Venturing into the hazardous sphere of the Catholic Church's sexual-abuse scandal, Santorum observed on a trip to Boston this summer that "it is no surprise that Boston, a seat of academic, political, and cultural liberalism in America, lies at the center of the storm." And, because he is the third-ranking Republican in the Senate, Santorum, who has hinted at an interest in national office, has been associated with the downward trend of the President's popularity numbers.

John Brabender, Santorum's campaign adviser, acknowledges that his candidate is burdened by the "baggage" of incumbency, and that the early poll numbers reflect the "bizarre caricature" that has settled upon Santorum in the years since his last campaign, in 2000. "Rick Santorum is profiled in the press as this George Bush, ultra-conservative, right-wing, ultra-pro-life Republican," Brabender says. Once the campaign begins in earnest, he added, it will work to counter his unfavorable rating by, among other things, telling voters that this year's *National Journal* ranking of senators did not include Santorum among the twenty most conservative. "There's a lot of things about Rick Santorum that are surprising," Brabender says. "He has an incredible record of legislation on fighting poverty, world AIDS, hunger, preserving open spaces—all these things that we've found time and time again, in testing with voters, that they're very surprised about. It seems very contrary to the Rick Santorum they always read about. That's the problem when you only run every six years—you only get to tell your side of the story every six years."

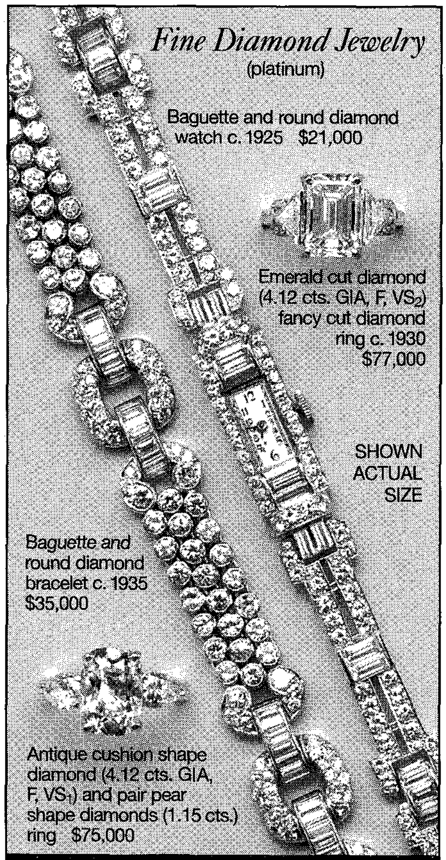
The fact remains that when Schumer was selling the idea of Casey's candidacy to Beltway Democrats, polls showed Casey leading Santorum by five points. By early summer, that gap had reached seven points, then thirteen. A poll taken in October showed Casey's lead over Santorum at eighteen points.

That may be why Democratic activists are beginning to sign on. Werthan says that the women in her circle, many of them new to politics, are as motivated by their desire to turn out Santorum as they are by abortion politics. "They are crazy over getting rid of Santorum," she says. "He scares them to death. I think they sort of woke up and said, 'Oh, my God! Nutso!' I think that they saw his ambitions unfold, and they saw that he was headed toward trying to run for President."

Kimberly C. Oxholm, a Democratic activist who is associated with Planned Parenthood, says that she and some of her friends have begun to develop a rationale for supporting an anti-abortion Democrat. "I'm beginning to feel comfortable," she says. "I think a lot of us are. Thinking about it nationally, Bob Casey is going to be, we hope, a member of the Democratic majority. That alone is going to be hugely beneficial for reproductive rights and women. He said he's not going to Washington to push an anti-abortion agenda. He'll be, hopefully, part of a majority, and he'll vote with people like Harry Reid"—the Democratic leader in the Senate. "Reid's not wonderful on abortion, either, but he's really good on all the family-planning stuff. Hopefully, there won't be any major vote coming up where he'll have to vote differently."

Even so, it is a measured enthusiasm. Oxholm's local Planned Parenthood affiliate is the one that was involved in the Supreme Court case over the senior Casey's Abortion Control Act. Oxholm says that she has given the maximum donation to Casey's campaign, but she adds, "I have to say, it was hard." She eased into making the donation, she says, by first deciding "that it was all right for my husband to write him a check."

"I was peripherally involved when Harris Wofford lost to Santorum," she says. "I feel somewhat guilty. I wouldn't give Wofford money, because he wasn't absolutely perfect on the choice issue—and look what we got." ♦


Fine Diamond Jewelry
(platinum)

Baguette and round diamond watch c. 1925 $21,000

Emerald cut diamond (4.12 cts. GIA, F, VS_2) fancy cut diamond ring c. 1930 $77,000

SHOWN ACTUAL SIZE

Baguette and round diamond bracelet c. 1935 $35,000

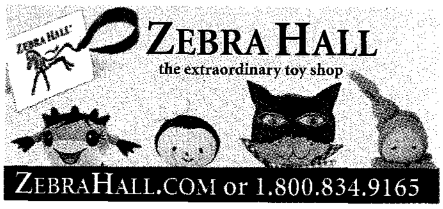
Antique cushion shape diamond (4.12 cts. GIA, F, VS_1) and pair pear shape diamonds (1.15 cts.) ring $75,000

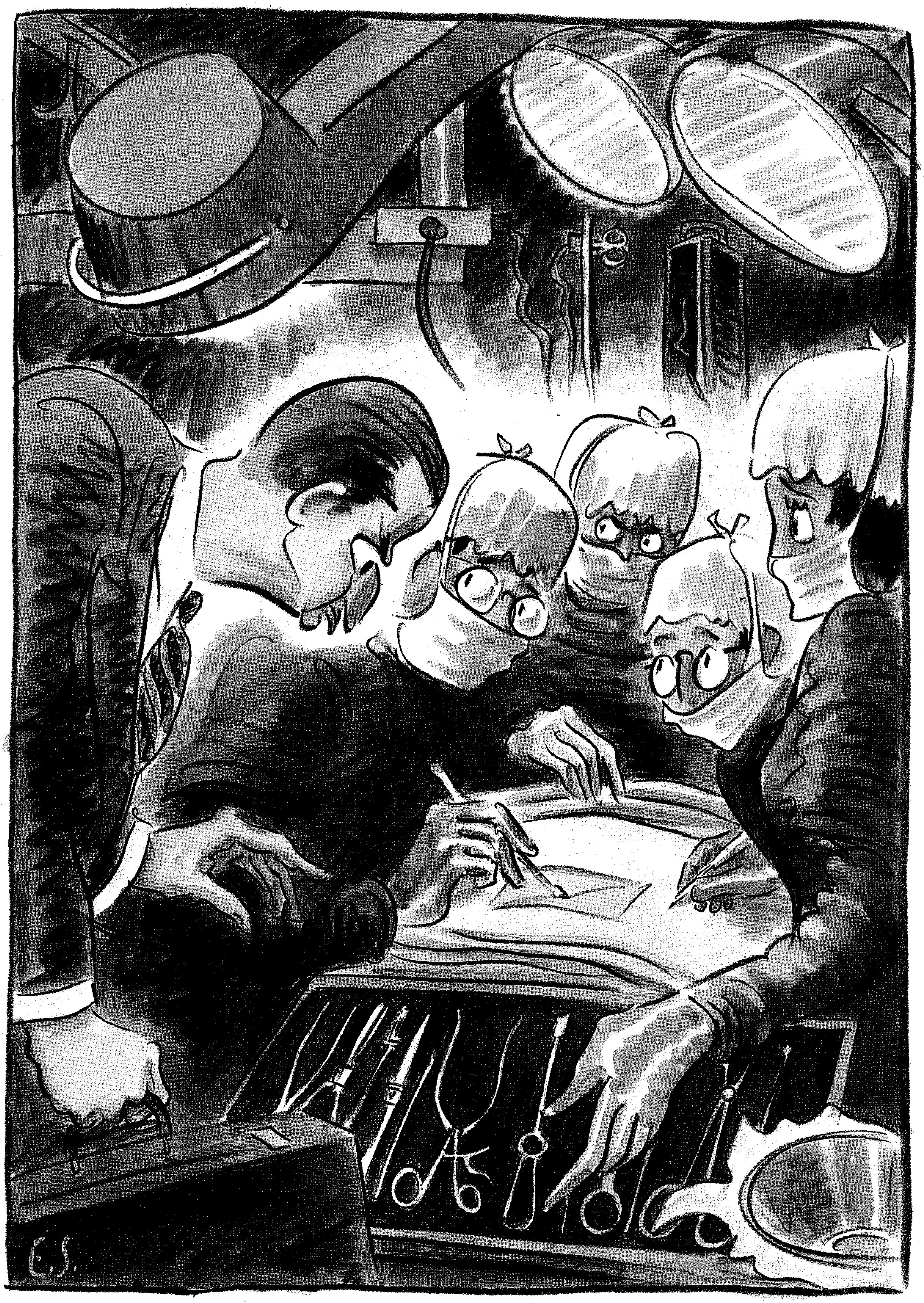
FIRESTONE AND PARSON
No.8 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617) 266-1858

University of Massachusetts Amherst
Translation Center
Providing high quality, full service translation, interpreting, & subtitling in over 80 languages.
1-877-77-UMASS | www.umass.edu/transcen

Do You Fear
Public Speaking?
Acclaimed Anxiety program used by top execs
As seen on NBC & ABC News
www.CTRN.com/speak
Call Rex Northen now: 212-582-8880 x1111

JAQUES
AMERICA
Croquet & Chess
Garden Games
Indoor Games
JAQUES
LONDON
ESTD 1795
877-374-8881
www.jaquesamerica.com


ZEBRA HALL
the extraordinary toy shop
ZEBRAHALL.COM or 1.800.834.9165



Malpractice lawsuits help only a tiny fraction of injured patients, but medicine has offered no genuine alternative.

THE MALPRACTICE MESS

Who pays the price when patients sue doctors?

BY ATUL GAWANDE

It was an ordinary Monday at the Middlesex County Superior Court in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fifty-two criminal cases and a hundred and forty-seven civil cases were in session. In Courtroom 6A, Daniel Kachoul was on trial for three counts of rape and three counts of assault. In Courtroom 10B, David Santiago was on trial for cocaine trafficking and illegal possession of a deadly weapon. In Courtroom 7B, a scheduling conference was being held for Minihan v. Wallinger, a civil claim of motor-vehicle negligence. And next door, in Courtroom 7A, Dr. Kenneth Reed faced charges of medical malpractice.

Reed was a Harvard-trained dermatologist with twenty-one years of experience, and he had never been sued for malpractice before. That day, he was being questioned about two office visits and a phone call that had taken place almost nine years earlier. Barbara Stanley, a fifty-eight-year-old woman, had come to see him in the summer of 1996 about a dark warty nodule a quarter-inch wide on her left thigh. In the office, under local anesthesia, Reed shaved off the top for a biopsy. The pathologist's report came back a few days later, with a near-certain diagnosis of skin cancer—a malignant melanoma. At a follow-up appointment, Reed told Stanley that the growth would have to be completely removed. This would require taking a two-centimetre margin—almost an inch—of healthy skin beyond the lesion. He was worried about metastasis, and recommended that the procedure be done immediately, but she balked. The excision that he outlined on her leg would have been three inches across, and she couldn't believe that a procedure so disfiguring was necessary. She said that she had a friend who had been given a diagnosis of cancer erroneously, and underwent unnecessary surgery. Reed pressed, though, and by the end of their discussion she allowed him to remove the visible tumor that remained on her thigh, only a half-inch excision, for a second biopsy. He, in turn, agreed to have another pathologist look at all the tissue and provide a second opinion.

To Reed's surprise, the new tissue specimen was found to contain no sign of cancer. And when the second pathologist, Dr. Wallace Clark, an eminent authority on melanoma, examined the first specimen he concluded that the initial cancer diagnosis was wrong. "I doubt if this is melanoma, but I cannot completely rule it out," his report said. Reed and Stanley spoke by phone on August 10, 1996, to go over the new findings.

None of this is under dispute; what's under dispute is what happened afterward. According to Barbara Stanley, Reed told her that she did not have a melanoma after all—the second opinion on the original biopsy "was negative"—and that no further surgery was required. That's not how Reed recalled the phone conversation. "I indicated to Barbara Stanley . . . that Dr. Wallace Clark felt that this was a benign lesion called a Spitz nevus, and that he could not be a hundred per cent sure it was not a melanoma," he testified. "I also explained to her that in Dr. Clark's opinion this lesion had been adequately treated, that follow-up would be necessary, and that Dr. Clark did not feel that further surgery was critical. I also explained to Barbara Stanley that this was in conflict with the previous pathology report, and that the most cautious way to approach this would be to allow me to [remove additional skin] for a two-centimetre margin." She told him, he said, that she didn't want more surgery. "At that point, I reëmphasized to Barbara Stanley that at least she should come in for regular follow-up." Unhappy with the care she received, she didn't return.

After two years, the growth reappeared. Stanley went to another doctor, and the pathology report came back with a clear diagnosis: a deeply invasive malignant melanoma. A complete excision, she was told, should probably have been done the first time around. When she finally did undergo the more radical procedure, the cancer had spread to lymph nodes in her groin. She was started on a yearlong course of chemotherapy. Five months later, she suffered a seizure. The cancer was now in her brain and her left lung. She had a course of brain and lung radiation. A few weeks after that, Barbara Stanley died.

But not before she had called a lawyer from her hospital bed. She found a full-page ad in the Yellow Pages for an attorney named Barry Lang, a specialist in medical-malpractice cases, and he visited her at her bedside that very day. She told him that she wanted to sue Kenneth Reed. Lang took the case. Six years later, on behalf of Barbara Stanley's children, he stood up in a Cambridge courtroom and called Reed as his first witness.

Malpractice suits are a feared, often infuriating, and common event in a doctor's life. (I have not faced a bona-fide malpractice suit, but I know to expect one.) The average doctor in a high-risk practice like surgery or obstetrics is sued about once every six years. Seventy per cent of the time, the suit is either dropped by the plaintiff or won in court. But the cost of defense is high, and when doctors lose, the average jury verdict is half a million dollars. General surgeons pay anywhere from thirty thousand to two hundred thousand dollars a year in malpractice-insurance premiums, depending on the litigation climate of the state they work in; neurosurgeons and obstetricians pay upward of fifty per cent more.

Every doctor, it seems, has a crazy-lawsuit story. My mother, a pediatrician, was once sued after a healthy two-

EDWARD SOREL

month-old she had seen for a routine checkup died of sudden infant death syndrome a week later. The lawsuit alleged that she should have prevented the death, even though a defining characteristic of SIDS is that it occurs without warning. One of my colleagues performed lifesaving surgery to remove a woman's pancreatic cancer only to be sued years later because she developed a chronic pain in her arm; the patient blamed it, implausibly, on potassium that she received by I.V. during recovery from the surgery. I have a crazy-lawsuit story of my own. In 1990, while I was in medical school, I was at a crowded Cambridge bus stop and an elderly woman tripped on my foot and broke her shoulder. I gave her my phone number, hoping that she would call me and let me know how she was doing. She gave the number to a lawyer, and when he found out that it was a medical-school exchange he tried to sue me for malpractice, alleging that I had failed to diagnose the woman's broken shoulder when I was trying to help her. (A marshal served me with a subpoena in physiology class.) When it became apparent that I was just a first-week medical student and hadn't been treating the woman, the court disallowed the case. The lawyer then sued me for half a million dollars, alleging that I'd run his client over with a bike. I didn't even have a bike, but it took a year and a half—and fifteen thousand dollars in legal fees—to prove it.

My trial had taken place in the same courtroom as Reed's trial, and a shudder went through me when I recognized it. Not all Americans, however, see the system the way doctors do, and I had come in an attempt to understand that gap in perspectives. In the courtroom gallery, I took a seat next to Ernie Browe, the son of Barbara Stanley. He was weary, he told me, after six years of excruciating delays. He works for a chemistry lab in Washington State and has had to take vacation time and money out of his savings to pay for hotels and flights—including for two trial dates that were postponed as soon as he arrived. "I wouldn't be here unless my mother asked me to, and she did before she died," he said. "She was angry, angry to have lost all those years because of Reed." He was glad that Reed was finally being called to account.

The dermatologist sat straight-backed and still in the witness chair as Lang fired questions at him. He was clearly trying not to get flustered. A friend of mine, a pediatric plastic surgeon who had had a malpractice suit go to trial, told me the instructions that his lawyer had given him for his court appearances: Don't wear anything flashy or expensive. Don't smile or joke or frown. Don't appear angry or uncomfortable, but don't appear overconfident or dismissive, either. How, then, are you supposed to look? Reed seemed to have concluded that the only choice was to look as blank as possible. He parsed every question for traps, but the strenuous effort to avoid mistakes only made him seem anxious and defensive.

"Wouldn't you agree," Lang asked, "that [melanoma] is very curable if it's excised before it has a chance to spread?" If a patient had asked this question, Reed would readily have said yes. But, with Lang asking, he paused, uncertain.

"It's hypothetical," Reed said.

Lang was clearly delighted with this sort of answer. Reed's biggest problem, though, was that he hadn't kept notes on his August 10th phone conversation with Barbara Stanley. He could produce no corroboration for his version of events. And, as Lang often reminded the jury, plaintiffs aren't required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant has committed malpractice. Lang needed ten of twelve jurors to think only that it was more likely than not.

"You documented a telephone conversation that you had with Barbara Stanley on August 31st, isn't that correct?" Lang asked.

"That is correct."

"Your assistant documented a discussion that you had with Barbara Stanley on August 1st, right?"

"That is correct."

"You documented a telephone call with Malden Hospital, correct?"

"That is correct."

"You documented a telephone conversation on September 6th, when you gave Barbara Stanley a prescription for an infection, correct?"

"That is correct."

"So you made efforts and you had a habit of documenting patient interactions and telephone conversations, right?"

"That is correct."

Lang began to draw the threads together. "Exactly what Barbara Stanley needed, according to you, [was] a two-centimetre excision, right?"

"Which is what I instructed Ms. Stanley to do . . ."

"Yet you did not tell Dr. Hochman"—Stanley's internist—"that she needed a two-centimetre excision, right?"

"That is correct."

"But you want this jury to believe you told Barbara Stanley?"

"I want this jury to believe the truth—which is that I told Barbara Stanley she needed a two-centimetre excision."

Lang raised his voice. "You *should* have told Barbara Stanley that . . . isn't that correct?" He all but called Reed a perjurer.

"I did tell Barbara Stanley, repeatedly!" Reed protested. "But she refused." As the examination continued, Reed tried to keep his exasperation in check, and Lang did all he could to discredit him.

"In your entire career, Doctor, how many articles have you published in the literature?" Lang asked at another point.

"Three," Reed said.

Lang lifted his eyebrows, and stood with his mouth agape for two beats. "In twenty years' time, you've published three articles?"

Without documentation, Reed was in a hard spot, and Lang's examination made my skin crawl. I could easily picture myself on the stand being made to defend any number of cases in which things didn't turn out well and I hadn't got every last thing down on paper. Lang was sixty years old, bald, short, and loud. Spittle flew in droplets. He paced constantly, and rolled his eyes at Reed's protestations. He showed no deference and little courtesy. He was almost a stereotype of a malpractice lawyer—except in one respect, and that was the reason I'd come to watch this particular trial.

Barry Lang used to be a doctor. For twenty-three years, he had a successful practice as an orthopedic surgeon, with particular expertise in pediatric orthopedics. He'd even served as an expert witness on behalf of other surgeons. Then, in a turnabout, he went to law school, gave up his medical practice, and embarked on a new career suing doctors. Watching him, I wondered, after all his experience did he understand something that the rest of us didn't?

TAXI
Gahan Wilson

"This one to your liking, sir?"

• •

I went to see Lang at his office in downtown Boston, on the tenth floor of 1 State Street, in the heart of the financial district. He welcomed me warmly, and I found that we spoke more as fellow-doctors than as potential adversaries. I asked why he had quit medicine to become a malpractice attorney. Was it for the money?

He laughed at the idea. Going into law "was a money disaster," he said. Starting out, he had expected at least some rewards. "I figured I'd get some cases, and if they were good the doctors would settle them quickly and get them out of the way. But no. I was incredibly naïve. No one ever settles before the actual court date. It doesn't matter how strong your evidence is. They always think they're in the right. Things can also change over time. And, given the choice of paying now or paying later, which would you rather do?"

He entered law practice, he said, because he thought he'd be good at it, because he thought he could help people, and because, after twenty-three years in medicine, he was burning out. "It used to be 'Two hip replacements today—yeah!'" he recalled. "Then it became 'Two hip replacements today—ugh.'"

When I spoke to his wife, Janet, she said that his decision to change careers shocked her. From the day she met him, when they were both undergraduates at Syracuse University, he'd never wanted to be anything other than a doctor. After medical school in Syracuse and an orthopedics residency at Temple University, he had built a busy orthopedics practice in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and had a fulfilling and varied life. Even when he enrolled in night classes at Southern New England School of Law, a few blocks from his office, his wife didn't think anything of it. He was, as she put it, "forever going to school." One year, he took English-literature classes at a local college. Another year, he took classes in Judaism. He took pilot lessons, and before long was entering airplane aerobatics competitions. Law school, too, began as another pastime—"It was just for kicks," he said.

After he finished, though, he took the bar exam and got his license. He was fifty years old. He'd been in orthopedics practice long enough to have saved a lot of money, and law had begun to seem much more interesting than medicine. In July, 1997, he handed his practice over to his startled partners, "and that was the end of it," he said.

He figured that the one thing he could offer was his medical expertise, and he tried to start his legal practice by defending physicians. But, because he had no experience, the major law firms that dealt with malpractice defense wouldn't take him, and the malpractice insurers in the state wouldn't send him cases. So he rented a small office and set up shop as a malpractice attorney for patients. He spent several thousand dollars a month for ads on television and in the phone book, dubbing himself "the Law Doctor." Then the phone calls came. Five years into his new career, his cases finally began going to trial. This is his eighth year as a malpractice attorney, and he has won settlements in at least thirty cases. Eight others went to trial, and he won half of them. Two weeks before the Reed trial, he won a four-hundred-thousand-dollar jury award for a woman whose main bile duct was injured during gallbladder surgery, forcing her to undergo several reconstructive operations. (Lang got more than a third of that award. Under Massachusetts state law, attorneys get no more than forty per cent of the first hundred and fifty thousand dollars, 33.3 per cent of the next hundred and fifty thousand, thirty per cent of the next two hundred thousand, and twenty-five per cent of anything over half a million.) Lang has at least sixty cases pending. If he had any money troubles, they are over.

Lang said that he gets ten to twelve calls a day, mostly from patients or their families, with some referrals from other lawyers who don't do malpractice. He turns most of them away. He wants a good case, and a good case has to have two things, he said. "No. 1, you need the doctor to be negligent. No. 2, you need the doctor to have caused damage." Many of the callers fail on both counts.

"I had a call from one guy. He says, 'I was waiting in the emergency room for four hours. People were taken ahead of me, and I was really sick.' I say, 'Well, what happened as a result of that?' 'Nothing, but I shouldn't have to wait for four hours.' Well, that's ridiculous."

Some callers have received negligent care but suffered little harm. In a typical scenario, a woman sees her doctor about a lump in her breast and is told not to worry about it. Still concerned, she sees another doctor, gets a biopsy, and learns that she has cancer. "So she calls me up, and she wants to sue the first doctor," Lang said. "Well, the first doctor was negligent. But what are the damages?" She got a timely diagnosis and treatment. "The damages are nothing."

I asked him how great the prospective damages had to be to make the effort worth his while. "It's a gut thing," he said. His expenses on a case are typically forty to fifty thousand dollars. So he would almost never take, say, a dental case. "Is a jury going to give me fifty thousand dollars for the loss of a tooth? The answer is no." The bigger the damages, the better. As another attorney told me, "I'm looking for a phone number"—damages worth seven figures.

Another consideration is how the plaintiff will come across to jurors. Someone may have a great case on paper, but Lang listens with a jury in mind. Is this person articulate enough? Would he or she seem unreasonable or strange to others? Indeed, a number of malpractice attorneys I spoke to confirmed that the nature of the plaintiff, not just of the injury, was a key factor in the awarding of damages. Vernon Glenn, a highly successful trial attorney from Charleston, South Carolina, told me, "The ideal client is someone who matches the social, political, and cultural template of where you are." He told me about a case he had in Lexington County, South Carolina—a socially conservative, devoutly Christian county that went seventy-two per cent for George W. Bush in the last election and produces juries unsympathetic to malpractice lawyers. But his plaintiff was a white, Christian female in her thirties with three young children who had lost her husband—a hardworking, thirty-nine-year-old truck mechanic who loved NASCAR, had voted Republican for the past twenty years, and had built the addition to their country home himself—to a medical error. During routine abdominal surgery, doctors caused a bowel injury that they failed to notice until, days later, he collapsed and died. The woman was articulate and attractive, but not so good-looking as to put off a jury. She wasn't angry or vengeful, but was visibly grieving and in need of help. If the family hadn't spoken English, if the husband had a long history of mental illness or alcoholism or cigarette smoking, if they'd been involved in previous lawsuits or had a criminal record, Glenn might not have taken the case. As it was, "she was darn close to the perfect client," he said. The day before trial, the defendants settled for $2.4 million.

Out of sixty callers a week, Barry Lang might take the next step with two, and start reviewing the medical records for hard evidence of negligent care. Many law firms have a nurse or a nurse practitioner on staff to do the initial review. Lang himself gathers all the records, arranges them chronologically, and goes through them page by page.

There is a legal definition of negligence ("when a doctor has breached his or her duty of care"), but I wanted to know his practical definition of the term. Lang said that if he finds an error that resulted in harm, and the doctor could have avoided it, then, as far as he is concerned, the doctor was negligent.

To most doctors, this is an alarming definition. Given the difficulty of many cases—unclear diagnoses, delicate operations—we all have serious "complications" that might have been avoided. I told Lang about a few patients of mine: a man with severe bleeding after laparoscopic liver surgery, a patient who was left permanently hoarse after thyroid surgery, a woman whose breast cancer I failed to diagnose for months. All were difficult cases. But, in looking back on them, I also now see ways in which I could have done better. Would he sue me? If he could show a jury how I might

THE OWL'S NIGHT

Here is a present
that yesterday doesn't touch.
When we reached
the last of the trees we noticed that we
were no longer able to notice.
When we looked at the trucks
we saw absence heaping up its selected things,
and pouring out its eternal tent around us.

Here is a present
that yesterday doesn't touch.
Silk thread slips between the mulberry trees,
letters on the night's notebook.
Only moths light our boldness
descending to the hollow of strange words:
Was this miserable man my father?
Perhaps I'll consider my situation here. Perhaps
I'll give birth, now, to myself, with myself,
and choose for my name vertical letters.

Here is a present
sitting in time's emptiness staring
at the trace of those who pass on the river's stalk
polishing their flutes with air . . . Perhaps speech
will become transparent, so we'll see windows in it, open.
Perhaps time will hurry, with us
carrying our tomorrow in its luggage.

Here is a present
without time.
He didn't find anyone here, anyone who remembered
how we left the door, a gust of wind. Anyone who remembered
when we fell off yesterday. Yesterday
broke over the floor, shrapnel gathered together
by others, like mirrors for their image, after us.

Here is a present
without place.
Perhaps I'll consider my situation, and scream at
the owl's night: Was that miserable man
my father, who makes me carry the burden of his history?
Perhaps I'll change my name, and choose
my mother's expressions and her customs as they ought
to be: This way she'll be able to joke with me
whenever salt touches my blood. This way she'll be able to
take care of me whenever a nightingale bites my mouth.

Here is a present
fleeting.
Here strangers hang their guns on
the branches of an olive tree, prepare dinner
quickly, from tin cans, and leave
quickly, for their trucks.

—*Mahmoud Darwish*

(*Translated, from the Arabic, by Jeffrey Sacks.*)

have avoided harm, and if the damages were substantial, he said, "I would sue you in a flash." But what if I have a good record among surgeons, with generally excellent outcomes and conscientious care? That wouldn't matter, he said. The only thing that matters is what I did in the case in question.

Lang insists that he is not engaged in a crusade against doctors. He faced three malpractice lawsuits himself when he was a surgeon. One involved an arthroscopy that he performed on a young woman with torn cartilage in her knee from a sports injury. Several years later, he said, she sued because she developed arthritis in the knee—a known, often unavoidable outcome. Against his wishes, the insurer settled with the patient for what Lang called "nuisance money"—five thousand dollars or so—because it was cheaper than fighting the suit in court.

In another case, a manual laborer with a wrist injury that caused numbness in three fingers sued because Lang's attempted repair made the numbness worse and left him unable to work. Lang said that he'd warned the patient that this was a high-risk surgery. When he got in, he found the key nerves encased in a thick scar. Freeing them was exceedingly difficult—"like trying to peel Scotch tape off wallpaper," he said—and some nerve fibres were unavoidably pulled off. But the insurer wasn't certain that it would prevail at trial, and settled for three hundred thousand dollars. Both cases seemed unmerited, and Lang found them as exasperating as any other doctor would.

The third case, however, was the result of a clear error, and although it took place two decades ago, it still bothers him. "I could have done more," he told me. The patient was a man in his sixties whom Lang had scheduled for a knee replacement. A few days before the surgery, the man came to his office complaining of pain in his calf. Lang considered the possibility of a deep-vein thrombosis—a blood clot in the leg—but dismissed it as unlikely and ordered no further testing. The patient did have a D.V.T., though, and when the clot dislodged, two days later, it travelled to his lungs and killed him. Lang's insurer settled the case for about four hundred thousand dollars.

"If I had been on the plaintiff's side, would I have taken that case against me?" he said to me. "Yes."

Being sued was "devastating," Lang recalled. "It's an awful feeling. No physician purposely harms his patient." Yet he insists that, even at the time, he was philosophical about the cases. "Being sued, although it sort of sucks the bottom out of you, you have to understand that it's also the cost of doing business. I mean, everybody at some time in his life is negligent, whether he's a physician, an auto mechanic, or an accountant. Negligence occurs, and that's why you have insurance. If you leave the oven on at home and your house catches fire, you're negligent. It doesn't mean you're a criminal." In his view, the public has a reasonable expectation: if a physician causes someone serious harm from substandard care or an outright mistake, he or she should be held accountable for the consequences.

The cases that Lang faced as a doctor, however, seemed to me to epitomize the malpractice debate. Two of the three lawsuits against him appeared unfounded, and, whatever Lang says now, the cost in money and confidence to our system is nothing to dismiss. Yet one of them concerned a genuine error that cost a man his life. In such cases, what do doctors believe should be done for patients and their families?

Bill Franklin is a physician I know who has practiced at Massachusetts General Hospital, in Boston, for more than forty years. He is an expert in the treatment of severe, life-threatening allergies. He is also a father. Years ago, his son Peter, who was then a second-year student at Boston University School of Medicine, called to say that he was feeling sick. He had sweats, and a cough, and felt exhausted. Bill had him come to his office and looked him over. He didn't find anything, so he had his son get a chest X-ray. Later that day, the radiologist called. "We've got big trouble," he told Bill. The X-rays showed an enormous tumor filling Peter's chest, compressing his lungs from the middle and pushing outward. It was among the

"You just come home and neglect her at night. I'm the one who has to neglect her all day."

• •

largest the radiologist had encountered.

After he had pulled himself together, Bill Franklin called Peter at home to give him and his young wife the frightening news. They had two children and a small house, with a kitchen that they were in the midst of renovating. Their lives came to a halt. Peter was admitted to the hospital and a biopsy showed that he had Hodgkin's lymphoma. He was put on high-dose radiation therapy, with a beam widened to encompass his chest and neck. Still, Peter was determined to return to school. He scheduled his radiation sessions around his coursework, even after they paralyzed his left diaphragm and damaged his left lung, leaving him unable to breathe normally.

The tumor proved too large and extensive for a radiation cure. Portions of it had continued to grow, and it had spread to two lymph nodes in Peter's lower abdomen. The doctors told his father that it was one of the worst cases they had ever seen. Peter was going to need several months of chemotherapy. It would make him sick and leave him infertile, but, they said, it should work.

Bill Franklin couldn't understand how the tumor had got so large under everyone's eyes. Thinking back on Peter's care over the years, he remembered that four years earlier Peter's wisdom teeth had been removed. The surgery had been performed under general anesthesia, with an overnight stay at M.G.H., and a chest X-ray would have been taken. Franklin had one of the radiologists pull the old X-ray and take a second look. The mass was there, the radiologist told him. What's more, the original radiologist who had reviewed Peter's chest X-ray had seen it. "Further evaluation of this is recommended," the four-year-old report said. But the Franklins had never been told. The oral surgeon and the surgical resident had both written in Peter's chart that the X-ray was normal.

If the tumor had been treated then, Peter would almost certainly have been cured with radiation alone, and with considerably less-toxic doses. Now it seemed unlikely that he'd finish medical school, if he survived at all. Bill Franklin was beside himself. How could this have happened—to one of M.G.H.'s own, no less? How would Peter's wife and children be supported?

Thousands of people in similar circumstances file malpractice lawsuits in order to get answers to such questions. That's not what Bill Franklin wanted to do. The doctors involved in his son's case were colleagues and friends, and he was no fan of the malpractice system. He had himself been sued. He'd had a longtime patient with severe asthma whom he had put on steroids to ease her breathing during a bad spell. Her asthma had improved, but the high doses resulted in a prolonged dementia, and she had to be hospitalized. The lawsuit alleged that Franklin had been negligent in putting her on steroids, given the risks of the medication, and that he was therefore financially responsible for the aftermath. Franklin had been outraged. She'd had a life-threatening problem, and he'd given her the best care he could.

Now, as an M.G.H. staff member, he decided to see the hospital director. He asked for a small investigation into how the mistake had been made and how it might be prevented in the future; he also wanted to secure financial support for Peter's family. The director told him that he couldn't talk to him about the matter. He should get a lawyer, he said. Was there no other way, Franklin wanted to know. There wasn't.

Here's where we in medicine have failed. When something bad happens in the course of care and a patient and family want to know whether it was unavoidable or due to a terrible mistake, where are they to turn? Most people turn first to the doctors involved. But what if they aren't very responsive, or their explanations don't sound quite right? People often call an attorney just to get help in finding out what happened.

"Most people aren't sure what they're coming to me for," Vernon Glenn, the South Carolina trial attorney, told me. "The tipoff is often from nurses saying, 'This was just wrong. This should never have happened.'" The families ask him to have a look at the medical files. If the loss or injury is serious, he has an expert review the files. "More often than you would think, we'll say, 'Here's what happened. We don't think it's a case.' And they'll say, 'At least we know what happened now.'"

Malpractice attorneys are hardly the most impartial assessors of care, but medicine has offered no genuine alternative—because physicians are generally unwilling to take financial responsibility for the consequences of their mistakes. Indeed, the one argument that has persuaded many doctors to be more forthright about mistakes is that doing so might make patients less likely to sue.

What would most doctors do if someone close to them was hurt by a medical error? In a recent national survey, physicians and non-physicians were given the following case: A surgeon orders an antibiotic for a sixty-seven-year-old man undergoing surgery, failing to notice that the patient's chart says that he is allergic to the drug. The mistake is not caught until after the antibiotic is given, and, despite every effort, the patient dies as a result. What should be done? Unlike fifty per cent of the public, almost none of the physicians wanted the surgeon to lose his license. Medical care requires that a thousand critical steps go right every day, and none of us would have a license if we were punished every time we faltered. At the same time, fifty-five per cent of the physicians said that they would sue the surgeon for malpractice.

That's what Bill Franklin, with some trepidation, decided to do. Lawyer friends warned him that he might have to leave his position on staff if things didn't go well. He loved the hospital and his practice; Peter's oral surgeon was a friend. But his son had been harmed, and he felt that Peter and his young family were entitled to compensation for all that they had lost and suffered. Peter himself was against suing. He was afraid that a lawsuit might so antagonize his doctors that they would not treat him properly. But he was persuaded to go along with it.

At first, the Franklins were told that no lawyer would take the case. The error had been made four years earlier, and this put it beyond the state's three-year statute of limitations. As in most states at the time, one could not file a civil claim for an action long in the past—never mind that Peter didn't learn about the error until it was too late. Then they found a young Boston trial attorney named Michael Mone, who took the case all the way to the Massachusetts Supreme Court and, in 1980, won a change in the law. Franklin v. Massachusetts General Hospital et al. ruled that such time limits must start with the *discovery* of harm, and the precedent stands today. The change allowed the case to proceed.

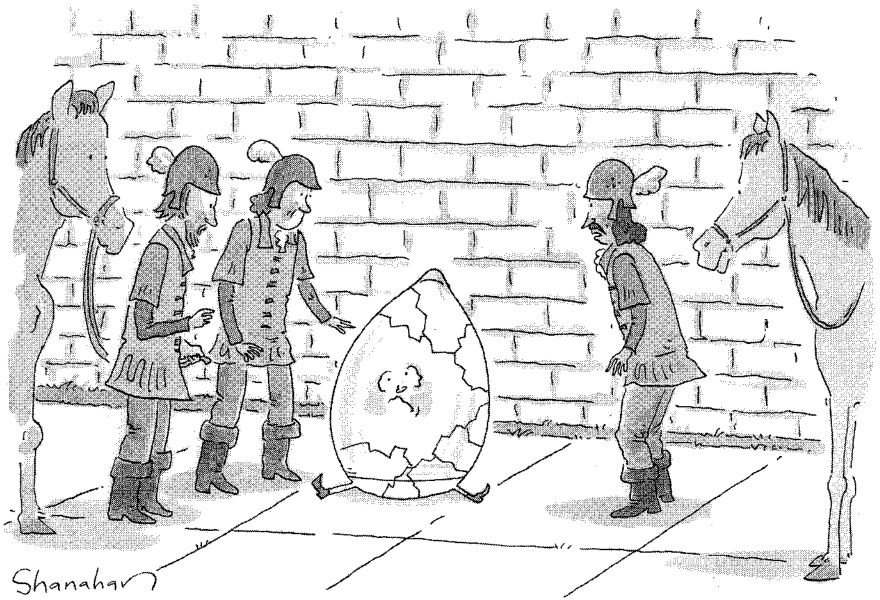
The trial was held in 1983, in the town of Dedham, in the same courthouse where, six decades earlier, the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti had been convicted of murder. "I don't remember much about the trial—I've blocked it out," Bev Franklin, Peter's mother, says. "But I remember the room. And I remember Michael Mone saying those words we'd been waiting so long to hear: 'Ladies and gentlemen, this young man had a time bomb ticking in his chest. And for four years—*four years*—the doctors did nothing.'" The trial took four days. The jury found in favor of Peter, and awarded him six hundred thousand dollars.

Bill Franklin says that he never experienced any negative repercussions at the hospital. His colleagues seemed to understand, and Peter's doctors did their very best for him. Peter continued to attend medical school. At the end of that long year, after six full cycles of chemotherapy, the lymph nodes in his chest continued to harbor residual cancer. He was given a new chemotherapy regimen, which so weakened his immune system that he almost died of a viral lung infection. He was in the hospital for weeks, and was finally forced to take a leave from school. The virus left him short of breath whenever he did anything more strenuous than climb half a flight of stairs, and with burning nerve pain in his feet. His marriage slowly disintegrated; a disaster can either draw people together or pull them apart, and this one pulled Peter and his wife apart.

Yet Peter survived. He eventually completed medical school, and decided to go into radiology. To everyone's surprise, he was rejected by his top-choice residency programs. A dean at Boston University called the chairman of radiology at one of the programs to find out why. "This guy's a maverick! He's suing doctors!" was the reply. The dean told the chairman Peter's story and then asked, "If this was your son, what would you do?" Peter got in after that. He chose Boston University's program and, when he finished, he was asked to join the staff there. Soon, he was made a division chief. He remarried and is now a fifty-six-year-old expert on orthopedic imaging, with a brush mustache, a graying thatch of hair, and chronic lung and liver troubles from his chemotherapy. Four years ago, he started a teleradiology group that now interprets scans for a hundred and fifty centers across the country. He is also a specialist for professional sports teams, including the San Diego Chargers and the Chicago Bears.

He says that his ordeal has made him exceedingly careful in his work. He has set up a review committee to find and analyze errors. Nonetheless, the single biggest budget item for his group is malpractice insurance. As it happens, the most common kind of malpractice case in the country involves allegations that doctors have made the kind of error that Peter once faced—a missed or delayed diagnosis. I asked him how he felt about being responsible for a lawsuit that had made it easier to sue for such claims. He winced and paused to consider his answer.

"I think the malpractice system has run



"Thank goodness he was wearing a condom."

amok," he finally said. "I don't think that my little experience has anything to do with it—the system is just so rampant with problems. But, if you're damaged, you're damaged. If we screw up, I think we should eat it." Wasn't he contradicting himself? No, he said; the system was the contradiction. It helps few of the people who deserve compensation. His case was unusual, and even that involved a seven-year struggle before all the appeals and challenges were dismissed. At the same time, too many undeserving patients sue, imposing enormous expense and misery. The system, as he sees it, is fundamentally perverse.

The paradox at the heart of medical care is that it works so well, and yet never well enough. It routinely gives people years of health that they otherwise wouldn't have had. Death rates from heart disease have fallen by almost two-thirds since the nineteen-fifties. The survival rate among cancer patients is now almost seventy per cent. A century ago, ten in a hundred newborns and one in a hundred mothers died; today, just seven in a thousand newborns and fewer than one in ten thousand mothers do. But this has required drugs and machines and operations and, most of all, decisions that can as easily damage people as save them. It's precisely because of our enormous success that people are bound to wonder what went wrong when we fail.

As a surgeon, I will perform about four hundred operations in the next year—everything from emergency repair of strangulated groin hernias to removal of thyroid cancers. For about two per cent of patients—for eight, maybe ten, of them—things will not go well. They will develop life-threatening bleeding. Or I will damage a critical nerve. Or I will make a wrong diagnosis. Whatever Hippocrates may have said, sometimes we do harm. Studies of serious complications find that usually about half are unavoidable; and, in such cases, I might be able to find some small solace in knowing this. But in the other half I will simply have done something wrong, and my mistake may change someone's life forever. Society is still searching for an adequate way to understand these instances. Are doctors villains if we make mistakes? No, because then we all are. But we are tainted by the harm we cause.

I watch a lot of baseball, and I often find myself thinking about the third baseman's job. In a season, a third baseman will have about as many chances to throw a man out as I will to operate on people. The very best (players like Mike Lowell, Hank Blalock, and Bill Mueller) do this perfectly almost every time. But two per cent of the time even they drop the ball or throw it over the first baseman's head. No one playing a full season fails to make stupid errors. When he does, the fans hoot and jeer. If the player's error costs the game, the hooting will turn to yelling. Imagine, though, that if every time Bill Mueller threw and missed it cost or damaged the life of someone you cared about. One error leaves an old man with a tracheostomy; another puts a young woman in a wheelchair; another leaves a child brain-damaged for the rest of her days. His teammates would still commiserate, but the rest of us? Some will want to rush the field howling for Mueller's blood. Others will see all the saves he's made and forgive him his failures. Nobody, though, would see him in quite the same way again. And nobody would be happy to have the game go on as if nothing had happened. We'd want him to show sorrow, to take responsibility. We'd want the people he injured to be helped in a meaningful way.

This is our situation in medicine, and litigation has proved to be a singularly unsatisfactory solution. It is expensive, drawn-out, and painfully adversarial. It also helps very few people. Ninety-eight per cent of families that are hurt by medical errors don't sue. They are unable to find lawyers who think they would make good plaintiffs, or they are simply too daunted. Of those who do sue, most will lose. In the end, fewer than one in a hundred deserving families receive any money. The rest get nothing: no help, not even an apology.

There is an alternative approach, which was developed for people who have been injured by vaccines. Vaccines protect tens of millions of children, but every year one in ten thousand or so is harmed by side effects. Between 1980 and 1986, personal-injury lawyers filed damage claims valued at more than $3.5 billion against doctors and manufacturers. When they began to win, vaccine prices jumped and some manufacturers got out of the business. Vaccine stockpiles dwindled. Shortages appeared. So Congress stepped in. Vaccines now carry a seventy-five-cent surcharge (about fifteen per cent of total costs), which goes into a fund for children who are injured by them. The program does not waste effort trying to sort those who are injured through negligence from those who are injured through bad luck. An expert panel has enumerated the known injuries from vaccines, and, if you have one, the fund provides compensation for medical and other expenses. If you're not satisfied, you can sue in court. But few have. Since 1988, the program has paid out a total of $1.5 billion to injured patients. Because these costs are predictable and evenly distributed, vaccine manufacturers have not only returned to the market but produced new vaccines, including ones against hepatitis and chicken pox. The program also makes the data on manufacturers public—whereas legal settlements in medical cases are virtually always sealed from view. The system has flaws, but it has helped far more people than the courts would have.

The central problem with any system remotely as fair and efficient as this one is that, applied more broadly, it would be overwhelmed with cases. Even if each doctor had just one injured and deserving patient a year (a highly optimistic assumption), complete compensation would exceed the cost of providing universal health coverage in America. To be practical, the system would have to have firm and perhaps arbitrary-seeming limits on eligibility as well as on compensation. New Zealand has settled for a system like this. It has offered compensation for medical injuries that are rare (occurring in less than one per cent of cases) and severe (resulting in death or prolonged disability). As with America's vaccine fund, there is now no attempt to sort the victims of error from the victims of bad luck. For those who qualify, the program pays for lost income, medical needs, and, if there's a permanent disability, an additional lump sum for the suffering endured. Payouts are made within nine months of filing. There are no mammoth, random windfalls, as there are in our system, but the public sees the amounts as reasonable, and there's no clamor to send these cases back to the courts.

The one defense of our malpractice system is that it has civilized the passions that arise when a doctor has done a devastating wrong. It may not be a rational system, but it does give people with the most heartbreaking injuries a means to fight. Every once in a while, it extracts enough money from a doctor to provide not just compensation but the satisfaction of a resounding punishment, fair or not. And although it does nothing for most plaintiffs, people whose loved ones have suffered complications do not then riot in hospital hallways, as clans have done in some countries.

We are in the midst of a flurry of efforts to "reform" our malpractice system. More than half of the states have enacted limits on the amount of money that juries can award someone who has been injured by a doctor, and Congress is considering a federal cap of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars on non-economic damage awards. But none of this will make the system fairer or less frustrating for either doctors or patients. It simply puts an arbitrary limit on payments so that doctors' insurance premiums might, at least temporarily, be more affordable.

Whether a cap is enacted or not, I will pay at least half a million dollars in premiums in the next ten years. I would much rather see that money placed in an insurance fund for my patients who suffer complications from my care, even if the fund cannot be as generous as we'd like it to be. There's no real chance of this happening, though. Instead, we're forced to make do with what we have.

THURSDAY-MORNING QUARTERBACK
Too bad what's-his-name wasn't in better form.
That was a great play when... when... I forget...
But why didn't that guy in the third quarter... no, second... no, third quarter... never mind...

• •

In Courtroom 7A of the Edward J. Sullivan Courthouse in Cambridge, after seven years of litigation; more than twenty thousand dollars in payments to medical experts; the procurement of bailiffs, court reporters, a judge, and two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar-an-hour defense attorneys; time on an overloaded court schedule; and the commandeered lives of fourteen jurors for almost two weeks, Barry Lang stood behind a lectern to make his closing argument on behalf of the estate of Barbara Stanley. "Dr. Reed is not a criminal," he told the jury. "But he was negligent, and his negligence was a key factor in causing Barbara Stanley's death."

It was not an open-and-shut case. Even in Lang's account, Reed was faced with a difficult medical problem: pathologists who contradicted each other about whether the first biopsy showed skin cancer; a second biopsy that failed to settle the issue; a distrusting patient who was angry with him, first for doing too much and then for doing too little. But, for the first time during the trial, Lang stopped his constant pacing. He spoke slowly and plainly. The story he told seemed lucid and coherent. In that fateful telephone conversation, he argued, Reed failed to offer Stanley the option of a more radical skin excision that might have saved her life.

Judge Kenneth Fishman then gave the jury its instructions. Stanley's son, Ernie Browe, sat in the front row of the gallery on one side, and Kenneth Reed sat a row back on the other. Both looked drained. When the judge finished, it was late in the afternoon, and everyone was dismissed for the day.

The next morning, the jury began its deliberations. Just before noon, the court officer announced that a verdict had been reached: Dr. Kenneth Reed was *not* negligent in his care of Barbara Stanley. Stanley's son slumped in his seat, looked down at the floor, and did not move for a long while. Barry Lang promptly stood up to put away his papers. "It was a tough case," he said. Reed was not there to hear the verdict. He had been seeing patients in his office all morning. ♦

PROFILES

THE THIN MAN

How Steve Buscemi became an indie icon.

BY JOHN LAHR

Steve Buscemi doesn’t loom into view. He’s not a looming kind of guy. On an overcast day in June, as I waited on the designated corner of Union Square to meet him for the first time, I called his assistant. “He’s late,” I said. “Where is he?” Buscemi, it turned out, was standing thirty feet away from me. Round-shouldered and wafer-thin, in a gray work shirt, black chinos, and a weathered denim jacket, with a baseball cap pulled tightly over his forehead, he was virtually invisible in the crowd.

Five feet nine and forty-seven years old, Buscemi could be almost anybody—or everybody. Give him some tattoos and a mane of shaggy hair, and he’s the squirt-gun-toting heavy-metal doofus in “Airheads” (1994); put him in a blue sequinned dress, a red pageboy wig, and high heels, and he’s the world-weary transvestite taxi-dancer in “Somebody to Love” (1994); slick back his hair and give him a pair of brown loafers, like the ones he wore as Tony Blundetto in “The Sopranos,” and he has the gaunt, retro lounge-lizard look of the director John Waters. (In fact, the likeness is so uncanny that Waters used Buscemi’s image on his Christmas card one year.)

Nothing about Buscemi’s physical presence suggests the poetic lineaments of masculine film glamour. He is pale, almost pallid—as if he’d been reared in a mushroom cellar. In a certain light, he can look cadaverous. His eyes are large and bulgy, with a hint of melancholy. When he smiles, his mouth displays a shantytown of uneven, uncapped teeth. And yet that unprepossessing ordinariness is what makes Buscemi captivating as a performer. It gives him the unmistakable stamp of the authentic, and it helps to explain his emergence over the past two decades as an icon of independent films. (Buscemi himself understands the value of his rumpled looks. When his dentist suggested fixing his teeth, he told her, “You’re going to kill my livelihood if you do that.”) “Steve is the little guy,” says the director Jim Jarmusch, who cast Buscemi in his 1989 film “Mystery Train.” “In the characters he plays and in his own life, he’s representing that part of us all that’s not on top of the world.”

When Buscemi and I finally found each other in Union Square, I raised the issue of lunch. There are more than twenty restaurants on Union Square, many of them excellent. Buscemi pondered for a moment, then chose the coffee shop in front of us (“bad food and worse service,” one review says). “Appetite” is not a word that comes to mind in relation to Buscemi. His boniness carries with it a hint of negativity, a kind of rejection of the world. (In the course of our two-hour lunch, he didn’t manage to finish a grilled cheese sandwich.) Likewise, although Buscemi has one of the most famous faces in modern cinema, he’s not afflicted with a star’s self-consciousness. He talks, but he also listens; he’s not watching himself go by, and he doesn’t carry himself with the expectation of being seen. As a result, he often isn’t. He sat in a booth at the busy coffee shop for close to an hour before someone spotted him. (“You were great in ‘Desperado’—one of my favorite movies of all time.” “Thank you,” Buscemi said. “Appreciate it.”)

Onscreen or off, Buscemi is never ostentatious. Still, with his simplicity and restraint—an emotional as well as a physical minimalism—he manufactures a truthfulness that always surprises. At lunch, as he tentatively told the story of his working-class upbringing (his father was a sanitation worker, his mother a hostess at Howard Johnson’s), he cast an unexpected light on his own edgy inhibition. We were talking about the terror he’d felt at nineteen, when he first thought of moving from Long Island to Manhattan to try to be an actor. What held him back, he said, was “this feeling that you don’t deserve to be heard, that you don’t really have anything to say or a point of view that’s interesting, because you haven’t been properly educated. I was very intimidated, basically feeling culturally inferior.”

When Buscemi acts, his thinness and his slouch—which seem a product of that original shame—only heighten his odd presence, which is a topic of conversation in many of the seventy-eight movies he’s made since his first major role, in “Parting Glances,” in 1986. In Joel and Ethan Coen’s “Fargo” (1996), the other characters repeatedly make fun of Buscemi’s Carl Showalter, a dopey kidnapper turned killer. When Frances McDormand’s beady-eyed, homespun policewoman presses a hooker for a detailed description of Showalter, whom she has recently bedded, all the girl can say is “The little guy was kinda funny-lookin’ . . . He wasn’t circumcised. . . . Funny-lookin’ more than most people, even.”

Buscemi’s persona is understated, opaque, bewildered, ironical. “You seem a little stoned. What are you on?” someone says to his character in Terry Zwigoff’s “Ghost World” (2000). He is in the hospital after having been betrayed, humiliated, and wrestled to the ground in a grocery store. “High on life,” he replies. “Steve’s a visitor in the world,” the director Alexandre Rockwell, who has worked with Buscemi on five films, said. “His body, his face—everything around him is whirling, but you always feel in Steve a stillness, almost a calm.” This stillness plays variously as anxiety, disconnection, and threat. Sometimes, a single character draws all three into a sort of trifecta of tension, like the silent hit man Mr. Shhh, in “Things to Do in Denver When You’re Dead” (1995). Buscemi’s look is deadbeat; his sense of humor is downbeat. He can play loss for laughs—in “The Impostors” (1998) he was

CORBIS

All Buscemi's characters are stuck in a purgatory from which they may or may not escape. Photograph by Martin Schoeller.

Happy Franks, a suicidal cabaret singer sobbing his way through "The Nearness of You"—or he can play it for real.

In his screenwriting and directorial feature début, "Trees Lounge" (1996), Buscemi starred as Tommy, a fictionalized version of himself. Tommy, Buscemi said, "is truly directionless." ("A story about one man's search . . . for who knows what" was the movie's promotional slug.) "Any true passions he has—anything artistic—are buried so deep he would never allow himself that." The movie was shot on the bland suburban streets of Valley Stream, Long Island, where Buscemi lived as a teen-ager. (It takes its name from one of the bars that were the hub of his existence after he graduated from high school.) At one point in the film, Tommy, after a dalliance with his friend's seventeen-year-old daughter, is chased around a softball diamond by the irate father wielding a baseball bat. He clambers up the backstop. For a moment, terrified, exhausted, hanging by his fingertips, he is splayed against the fence like a monkey in a cage—a perfect visual metaphor for the suspended animation of Buscemi's hapless, lovelorn youth. ("I remember kissing a girl at a party and she threw up on my shoes," Buscemi said of his teen-age years.)

For an actor, the challenge is to make the ordinary look interesting. Buscemi is a master at this sleight of hand. "I sort of get this intuitive feeling about what the character is, or how he talks, or how he says his lines," he explained. "I feel that my impulses are really all I have." In the penultimate scene of "Trees Lounge," after finally being throttled by his furious friend, Tommy ends up at the hospital, where his ex-girlfriend has just given birth to a child that may or may not be his. His face is discolored from his beating and his lip is split. He starts out with some friendly teasing about the baby—"He's a little old man. Could they take some of the wrinkles out?"—and builds to a painful revelation of his own confused desires. "I don't know what I'm doin'," he tells his ex-girlfriend. "I just feel like . . . I don't know what I feel. I don't feel anything. Except lost." Tommy is looking for salvation. "Look, I don't care if the baby's not mine," he says, finally. The moment is at once droll and desperate. Buscemi plays it entirely with his eyes, which are pleading at first, and then, when he is rebuffed, fill with sadness. "Would you mind if I just sit here for a while?" Tommy asks. As he sits, Buscemi allows himself to do nothing but live in the mournful bewilderment of the character, whom he understands all too well.

These days, Buscemi lives with his wife, the artist Jo Andres, and their fourteen-year-old son, Lucian, in a three-story brownstone in Park Slope, Brooklyn. One bright morning last fall, Buscemi and I climbed into his gray Volkswagen station wagon and drove five miles, to East New York, where he spent his early years. "We're going to a different neighborhood," he said, with characteristic understatement. Buscemi is a slow driver—a point of some contention in his family and the subject of much amusement among his friends—but in only a few minutes the landscape around us changed dramatically. "This is one of the more

"Relax, Ashwell. We don't say 'Ka-ching' until the deal is signed."

neglected neighborhoods," he said as we rolled up Liberty Avenue, where he used to play punchball and which was now littered with glass and garbage. As we got out of the car, a posse of tattooed Latina girls in toreador pants passed by. There were iron grates on the doors of fenced-in one-story houses, yapping dogs patrolling the small swards of green, and barbed wire around St. Michael's Church, where the jug-eared and crewcut young Buscemi had sung in the choir and taken his First Communion. "Tough kids, tough women," Buscemi said of his old stomping ground. "There's a toughness that I admire, even though I don't feel like a tough guy." He added, "I was a timid kid. I was not getting into scrapes. I lived in fear of either being beaten up by tougher kids or yelled at by the nuns." The church was locked; part of the playground where Buscemi had flipped cards was now a parking lot. But his first home stood more or less as it had been when he was growing up. "This is it," he said, pointing to a modest tan building on Liberty Avenue.

The house had been owned by Buscemi's grandmother and occupied by her five children and their families. Buscemi's family lived in an attached apartment. His parents, John and Dorothy, slept on a foldout sofa in the living room; Steve and his brothers—Jon, Michael, and Ken—slept in the only bedroom, and played with their cousins in the enclosed back yard. "I wasn't allowed to cross the street, except when I went to school," Buscemi said. Still, he wasn't entirely protected. At the age of four, he was hit by a bus and fractured his skull. At eight, he was knocked down by a car. He had a persistent nightmare: "My fingers are in a chain-link fence and a dog on the other side is coming at me. I can't free my fingers in time, and the dog always gets my hand." It was his parents' constant arguments, however, that haunted his waking life. " 'The Honeymooners'—when I was a kid, that was a documentary to me," he says. (He keeps a still photograph from the show on his kitchen counter.) "Me and her, we used to go at it," Buscemi's father said of himself and his wife, explaining that he has what he calls "the Buscemi temper." "When Steven plays a psychopath, he's drawing from my brother and myself. Sometimes you just snap. Then you don't care about nothing." "I was really a Catholic," Buscemi said. "A good boy. I thought 'shut up' was a bad word. Whenever my parents would curse, I'd make the sign of the cross, because I thought they would go to Hell. I was concerned for their souls."

As a child, Buscemi was always able to keep himself entertained. "I used to draw a lot, keep a journal, make up cartoons," he said. "For a while, I wanted to be a ventriloquist. For my sixth birthday, I remember asking for a Jerry Mahoney doll—the best birthday present I ever got, hands down." Buscemi took the dummy to school and used it "to make fun of the teacher and get away with it." "That was my first taste of standup," he said. Most of his performing, however, was done for his family—telling jokes and improvising sketches and magic tricks. Both of Buscemi's parents were interested in show business. (John's father, Giuseppe, had been a singing waiter in Coney Island; Dorothy's father, Harry Wilson, had been a projectionist, and reputedly worked the spotlight for the Dolly Sisters, a famous vaudeville act.) And entertaining was Buscemi's way of winning his father's respect. "I pushed him," John said. "I'd say, 'Hey, Steve, come here.' He would tell jokes. . . . I'd put him right in the center of the table. As soon as I put him up, everybody would laugh."

After serving in Korea, John had taken advantage of the G.I. Bill to study to be a TV cameraman and lighting technician. Television was in its infancy then; stations were starting up across the country, and John got a job offer in Virginia, but Dorothy didn't want to leave Brooklyn. He gave up the opportunity, and then he floundered. "By the time I was thirty-one, I found myself going nowhere in life," he says. All that he retained of his former ambition was a Super 8 camera, which he used to record his family life. Buscemi recalls appearing as the bad guy in a home-movie version of "Superman" when he was seven. "I loved performing in front of the camera," he says. "I remember when my dad developed the film and projected it for the first time. It was so exciting for me to see that, to get his approval. I remember asking my dad—this is embarrassing to admit—'I was the best, right?' "

In 1966, when Buscemi was eight, the family moved from East New York to a handyman's special, a two-story house that looked like a farmhouse, in Valley Stream. "Valley Stream was like Hollywood," Buscemi's father said. "Everything was serene. This was coming home to Heaven." His son disagreed. Nowadays, the house—where John and Dorothy still live—feels spruce and bright; in the years when Buscemi was living there and sharing the attic with his brother Jon, visiting friends found the place cramped and oppressive. Buscemi lay in bed at night longing to escape. "I remember feeling like if I don't figure out a way to become an actor I don't know how I'll be able to live," he said. "At the same time, it seemed utterly impossible." Until he saw "Grease" on Broadway as part of his high-school prom weekend, Buscemi had never been to the theatre. (He was in his twenties when he saw his first serious play—the Wooster Group's version of Arthur Miller's "The Crucible.") He participated in a few high-school productions, but his awareness of his own talent came from his ability to entertain his friends. A member of the varsity soccer and wrestling teams, as well as the jock fraternity Alpha Omega Theta, Buscemi was, by his own account, "a bit of a wise-ass, a troublemaker." He and his friends threw eggs at the neighborhood auxiliary police, and once he put his skinniness to use by slipping through the back window of a bar to hand out cases of beer.

After he graduated from high school, however, Buscemi lost his focus. "It was like the end of the world," his father said. "I never seen a kid who didn't want to see school come to an end." The idea of going to college was not encouraged in the Buscemi household, but Steve had nothing else to hope for. He was weighed down by the stultifying sense that "this is it—there's not much gonna go on in my life." John counselled his boys to take the civil-service exam, which could lead to a lifetime of steady paychecks. They did as they were told. (Jon now works for a cable company, and Ken is a track worker for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Michael is an actor.) While he was waiting for his name to come up on the civil-service roster, Buscemi pumped gas at the local Getty station and drove an ice-cream truck. These were the days when he spent six or seven hours a night in bars. With Peter Frampton, Pink Floyd, and Led Zeppelin on the jukebox, and a beer or a tequila sunrise in his hand, Buscemi tuned out. "It was just a feeling of nothingness, a void," he said. That void applied to women as well. "I was not lucky at all—like zero," he said, making a circle with his tapered thumb and forefinger. "I got along very well with women. I was a good listener. They saw me more as a brother, somebody they could confide in. I was really shy sexually. I just couldn't get to a place where I felt comfortable enough, where performance anxiety wasn't a big issue."

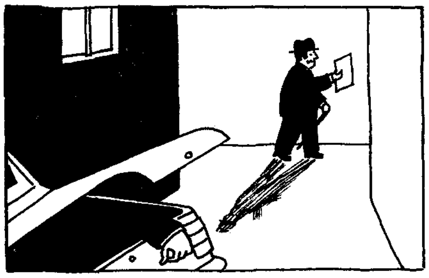
Eighteen months after finishing high school, Buscemi began talking about buying a van and driving to Hollywood. His father, wanting to keep him closer to home, reminded him that the city owed him six thousand dollars, from a settlement after his childhood bus accident. "You can use that money before you're twenty-one, as long as you use it for school," John said. "What are you getting at?" Buscemi asked. "You ever think to go to acting school?" John replied. Buscemi was stunned. "Steve, I don't want you to *become* an actor," his father explained. "But at least it'll give you some kind of direction. It'll be like finishing school. They'll polish you down." Buscemi didn't hesitate for long. In 1977, he interviewed at the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute.

Buscemi had no artistic vocabulary, no knowledge of dramatic literature, no confidence, and no experience. Show business, as he told me, was a mystery to him. He also had nothing to lose. "The alternative was worse," he said. "Existing instead of living." "He was one of those people that when he walks in you wonder, Why does he want to be an actor?" Buscemi's teacher John Strasberg said of his student. "He looked very sweet. He was extremely quiet. For the longest time, I didn't know what he wanted to do, because his work was relatively inexpressive. In the beginning, if anything was going on, I couldn't see it."

For a year, Buscemi commuted the fifteen miles to Manhattan. Then he found a hundred-dollar-a-month walkup on Avenue A, where a wooden panel on top of the bathtub served as his dining-room table. "I thought, What am I doing? I'm fooling myself. I'm going to be eaten alive by this city," he said. "I remember one Valley Stream friend of mine saying, 'How can you live there? It's filthy, it's full of faggots.' I started to feel really cut off from some of my friends. . . . And then I just developed an attitude: See what happens. You have to get over the fear of whether or not you belong." Eventually, the burgeoning East Village art scene became Buscemi's university. "I felt so ignorant for so long," he said. "I had a lot of catching up to do."

By day, Buscemi moved furniture and took acting lessons; by night, he tried his hand at standup comedy, telling self-deprecating jokes about his looks and his day job. In those days, Buscemi's greatest ambition was to be in a sitcom. He was working hard, but, he confessed, not "burning up the comedy scene." Nonetheless, he got laughs—enough to pass the audition at New York's biggest comedy venue, the Improv, where he worked the same room, though not the same time slots, as Larry David, Jerry Seinfeld, and Gilbert Gottfried. ("By the time I got on, there were only a couple of people in the audience," he said.) Buscemi discovered that he liked the attention but not the competitive isolation of the comic. "When you're doing standup, you can't share that with anybody," he says. "When you're acting, you're sharing it with an audience, but also with the people onstage. That's very important to me." His problem, he said, was "I didn't have my own thing. I was not defined as a comedian or as a person. . . . When I was playing a character, I felt more comfortable within myself."

The challenges of comedy and of characterization came together for Buscemi around 1982, in the form of Mark Boone, Jr., who was working as a bartender at the Red Bar in the East Village. In eight years of collaboration as the surreal performance duo Steve and Mark, Buscemi and Boone gained an avid following. Their form of humor was, according to Jarmusch, "somewhere between avant-garde theatre and comedy." Buscemi was nervous and mild-mannered, with, according to Boone, "an insane desire not to be beat"; Boone, despite his surly and forthright swagger, was more laid-back. Boone was inspired but wayward; Buscemi was all business. Their comic chemistry made use of their differences. "A lot of our pieces were about miscommunication or envy," Buscemi says.



Their artistic battles were usually fought at Veselka, a Ukrainian coffee shop on Second Avenue, where they met to work up material for their sketches, which dealt with situations such as competing panhandlers and bickering Hare Krishnas. "A lot of things in the beginning came from eavesdropping on something that somebody in the next booth would be saying," Boone says. In "Yap Thaw," their finest performance piece, Steve and Mark, dressed in gray and wearing socks on their hands, came onstage as dogs—waking, drinking, digging, barking, biting, fighting—then mutated into men. The scene exploited the concentration, aggression, and uncertainty out of which the two performers made drama. It won them their first notice in the *Times:* "An intellectual East Village variant of the classic male comedy teams. . . . A satisfyingly Beckettian comic turn."

Communication between the two actors, though, was often difficult. "I was always getting my aggression out on Boone," Buscemi said. "His timing was so different from mine. I would be upset with him for not coming in sooner with his line. He'd get upset with me for anticipating it." Nonetheless, at Folk City, a popular music venue in the Village, their act went over so well that they were allowed to write, cast, and stage forty minutes of material every week for fifteen weeks. "We were sick to death of each other at the end," Boone says. "The last three things we did were just about fighting." Still, the act was a laboratory from which Buscemi emerged with newfound cunning and concentration. "I really learned so much from Mark about timing and about how not to go for the obvious laugh," Buscemi said. "It's O.K. to leave the audience in the dark for a little bit and let it unfold—let the audience do some work."

"If he can't get Yard of the Month, he'd rather just burn it."

Buscemi met Jo Andres at about the same time he met Boone. Andres had known about him months before he spotted her, on the block of East Tenth Street between Avenue A and First, where they both lived. One night in late 1983, Andres had been walking through the East Village with her friend Tom Murrin, who called himself the Alien Comic. (Buscemi subsequently made a short film about him, "Luna Macaroona.") They spotted a poster for Steve and Mark. "See that guy?" Andres said, pointing to Buscemi. "Someday I'm gonna find that guy and snag him."

Nowadays, because of Buscemi's fame, Andres jokingly refers to herself as "the president of the Chopped Liver Club." When the couple first met, however, she was the one with the reputation. She was nearly thirty; he was twenty-six. She was an innovative choreographer in the flourishing downtown art scene, and she had made experimental movies, toured Europe, earned grants, and got reviews. "I was totally fascinated by her—the way she looked, the way she smiled," Buscemi said. "Then to find out that she was this talented person. . . . Her work was mysterious and fascinating to me."

With Andres as his companion and his guide, Buscemi found himself at the center of one of the golden periods of American experimental performance. He appeared in a few of Andres's dance pieces and in the avant-garde plays of John Jesurun, including a thirty-six-episode cult hit, "Chang in a Void Moon," at the Pyramid Club. He acted with the Wooster Group at the Performing Garage, in SoHo. The Limbo Lounge, the Pyramid Club, King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, Club 57, Darinka, and the Red Bar were the landmarks of his new life. Buscemi's circle of acquaintances included the directors Jarmusch, Rockwell, Eric Mitchell, Elizabeth LeCompte, Tom DiCillo, and Sara Driver; the actors Spalding Gray, Willem Dafoe, Richard Edson, Eszter Balint, Ron Vawter, and Black-Eyed Susan; the performance artists Rockets Redglare, John Kelly, and Frank Maya; the visual artists Julian Schnabel and George Condo; the dancers Anne Iobst, Lucy Sexton, and Mimi Goese; and the musical act They Might Be Giants.

One night in 1984, an eleven-o'clock show at the Limbo Lounge featuring Tom Murrin and Iobst and Sexton's post-punk feminist dancing duo, Dancenoise, was cancelled because of complaints from the neighbors about a heavy-metal band that had played earlier. The performers and the audience were milling around outside the club, wondering what to do, when Buscemi said, "Why don't you do the show at my apartment?" "Thirty or more people, and all our props, walked to Steve's house," Murrin says. "Dancenoise and I performed right there in Steve's front room. Dancenoise's shows often ended in a cascade of blood, and my shows were pretty messy, too." Murrin continues, "I remember telling him how generous I thought he was. He said, 'Heck, I wanted to see the shows.' Later, at his apartment, I noticed a splotch of red on the wall. I said, 'What's this?' He said, 'Dancenoise blood.' It was a memorable night, and he didn't want to clean it off."

In 1980, after his name came up on the civil-service list, Buscemi accepted a job as a probationer with Engine Company 55, in Little Italy. For fear of becoming the butt of his fellow-firemen's wisecracks, he said nothing about his acting. "I thought they would think it was less than a manly thing to do," he says. Once the other firefighters figured out his secret passion, however, they supported it. "They forced me to perform at parties," Buscemi said. They also attended his shows. His avant-garde friends thought his regular job and paycheck were similarly glamorous.

Buscemi's schedule of performing and firefighting was exhausting. He wanted to go into show business full time, but he worried that it was too much of a risk. He had no agent, no connections to mainstream entertainment, and no conventional good looks. "Steve's face originally was a face that nobody wanted to look at," Jesurun said. "Back then, it was Rob Lowe all the way. People would say to me, 'You gotta get somebody technically handsome up there.' " Finally, in the fall of 1984, Buscemi took a three-month leave of absence from the Fire Department, which soon extended to a year. He was into his second year of leave, waiting tables at King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, when a friend from the firehouse came in and asked him how he was doing. "I said, 'I've got a film coming out, I'm gonna be doing a play,' " Buscemi said. "He went back and told everybody I was miserable and was just putting up a front." The men of Engine Company 55 took it upon themselves to prepare the paperwork for Buscemi to rejoin them. "Guys, I love that you did this for me," Buscemi said. "But I'm not coming back."

In 1986, Buscemi appeared as a rock singer dying of AIDS in Bill Sherwood's "Parting Glances." The low-budget independent film, which now feels creaky and caricatured, was one of the first movies to deal with the AIDS crisis. "He took that part at a time when a lot of straight actors would never take a gay part," Jesurun said. When "Parting Glances" was released, the *Times* dismissed it as "a parade of homosexual stereotypes" but singled out Buscemi's "powerfully anarchic presence." With the review in hand, Murrin rushed into King Tut's Wah Wah Hut. "I was telling Jo how I thought this would be a big break for Steve—a lot of other directors would be noticing him, he was going to get more movie roles," Murrin said. "She said, 'Well, good, because he's a better actor than he is a waiter.' "

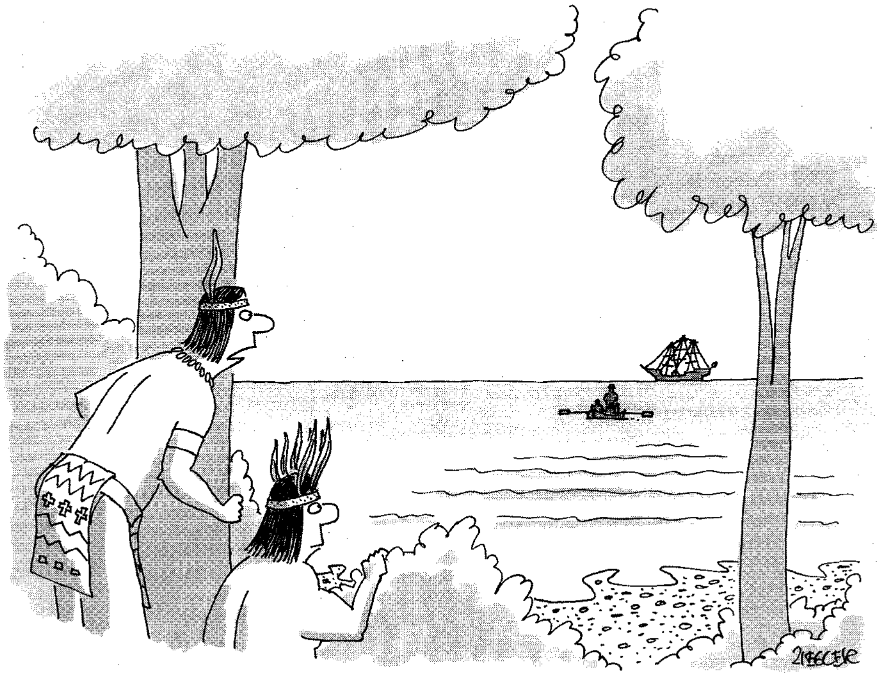
In the next three years, Buscemi made fourteen movies; by the mid-nineties, the number had risen to forty-two. "All of a sudden, it was like there was a Steve Buscemi tax in Hollywood," Jarmusch said. "It was like, 'You want to make a film? You must have Steve.' "

It wasn't Buscemi's bug-eyed stare or his sallow face or his threatening concentration that got him the part of Mr. Pink, the most lethal bad tipper in film history, in Quentin Tarantino's "Reservoir Dogs" (1992); it was his slick black hair on an audition tape for a Neil Simon comedy. According to Buscemi, Tarantino hired him because he thought he looked like a criminal. Mr. Pink was Buscemi's calling card to the mainstream. "It was the first time the West Coast knew who I was," he said.

The complexity that Buscemi brings to his bad guys has as much to do with the humanity he exudes as with the hatred he acts out. (Although the tipping scene in "Reservoir Dogs" was the prologue to a bloodbath, when the movie's action figures were marketed Buscemi refused to license his image unless the Mr. Pink doll was issued without a gun.) "You always like him in a movie," John Waters said. "Even if he's a villain, you're in on it with him." Buscemi is almost never just a cold-blooded killer; he is also a hilarious victim. In "Fargo," for instance, Buscemi's character is first shot in the face, then fed into a wood-chipper. In Martin Scorsese's segment of "New York Stories" (1989), Nick Nolte literally wipes the floor with Buscemi. And at the finale of "Mystery Train" Buscemi, after being accidentally shot in the leg, is dumped into a flatbed truck.

After a while, however, Buscemi got tired of being cast as what he calls "sleazy psycho types." "So I thought, Why not write an interesting part for myself and my friends?" he said. "I also missed the creative control I enjoyed when I was working with Boone. I thought, If we could create our own work in theatre, why not in a film?"

Making the decision was easy; writing the script was hard. Buscemi enrolled in a weekend screenwriting course. Among the wide-eyed notes in his black-and-white-marbled composition book are "Make your writing visual"; "Don't pitch in detail but know it in detail. . .2-3 minutes. Take notes"; "Know [the producers'] agenda—what they want from you? Never write a spec script from their idea. Never talk money." The instructor preached the gospel of structure; he taught his students never to write dialogue or scenes until the whole story was mapped out. "I tried making an outline," Buscemi said. "It always frustrated me. I could feel my body resisting." Then, quite by chance, he found himself at a John Cassavetes retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. "The films were so unpredictable," he said. "They went in directions that were surprising and not conventional. At the end of the film, I felt like I'd lived through an experience." In a period of ten days, Buscemi watched all of Cassavetes's films. Then, instead of trying to know everything about the structure and the characters of his movie before sitting down to write, Buscemi allowed himself to get lost. "Trees Lounge" is remarkable proof of the method, a complex film in which the apparent aimlessness of the narrative becomes a metaphor for the stalled lives it tracks. The movie was on about a half-dozen ten-best lists in 1996, and it has continued to have an influence in American culture.



"Dude! I am so not prepared for this!"

"It was very well written and very simple," David Chase, the creator of "The Sopranos," says. "I really liked the way it was cast." He briefly considered Buscemi for the role of Tony Soprano, and also admired the performance that Buscemi had drawn out of the twenty-one-year-old Chloë Sevigny. Chase hired Buscemi's casting directors for "The Sopranos," and he invited Buscemi to direct an episode. (The episode Buscemi directed, "Pine Barrens," was nominated for an Emmy in 2001, and is generally considered one of the series' best.) Buscemi directed two more episodes, in the show's fourth and fifth seasons. Last year, he was in front of the cameras, playing Tony Blundetto, an ex-con and erstwhile masseur, who gets whacked in the finale by his cousin Tony Soprano. And this summer he returned for his fourth directorial outing.

On a sweltering day in early August, the mass maneuver that is the cast and crew of "The Sopranos" took over the parking lot of Leonard's La Dolce Vita—a deluxe baronial folly that sits next to a Mobil station on Northern Boulevard in Great Neck. The restaurant's monumental façade features six Corinthian columns and a pair of lions spewing water into seashells; the décor of its chandeliered interior seems to come entirely from those Fifth Avenue kitsch emporiums that are permanently "Going Out of Business." Buscemi was directing Episode No. 70, "Mr. and Mrs. Sacrimoni Request," in which the mobster Johnny Sack, awaiting trial in prison, is allowed out for six hours to attend his daughter's wedding. It was the most strategically complicated episode he'd taken on—nine trucks, four trailers, a hundred and one actors, two hundred and fifty extras.

Buscemi arrived on the set at 3 P.M., in his usual gray-and-black mufti and sandals. Among the beefy crew members and the Italian-American cast, he was easily the thinnest male, a strand of spaghetti amid meatballs. Even on the set, he moved in his own circle of solitude. He didn't hold court or make scenes or give line readings or dress anyone down. Buscemi was a general who almost never signalled his command. "Some directors are very authoritative, and with that maybe a little condescending," the episode's director of photography, Phil Abraham, told me. "Steve's got a very light touch."

Buscemi surveyed the hubbub of the day's first rehearsal on the restaurant's garish second floor. Abraham was arranging the stand-ins, each with his character's name on a strip of masking tape above his lapel, into a semicircle, for a shot of Tony and his posse gossiping to another crew of wiseguys about Johnny Sack's emotional behavior—he breaks down when the feds take him back to prison. At three-thirty, the "Sopranos" regulars arrived to take up their positions. Buscemi began moving them around and mixing some extras into the swaggering scrum. "I just didn't want it to look like the Jets against the Sharks," he said.

Buscemi's directing style, Chase says, "is clear and unpretentious. There's none of that tortured artist. He doesn't act out." In directing, as well as in acting, Buscemi leaves room for accidents; he doesn't overplan. He trusts the craft of his collaborators, and his confidence shows itself in his readiness to take a good idea from anyone. "There's something about being naïve," he said. "Really interesting things come because you don't know what the rules are, what you can and can't do. I have to be careful I don't fall into a place where you take fewer risks." "To be indecisive is not a possibility for a lot of guys," Abraham said. "Steve's not that way at all. Steve's like, 'Let's figure it out together.' " After huddling for a while with Abraham, Buscemi rearranged the grouping, then returned to look at the new formation through the camera lens. "He's not very visual," Abraham continued. "I think he'll respond to visual things when he's sort of led down that way. I don't think he thinks through visual transitions between scenes."

Buscemi's focus is primarily on character. "This episode is about appearances, people's perceptions of each other," he said. "Tony is coming out of the hospital and needs to reëstablish himself. Johnny Sack loses face. Phil Leotardo sees his opening." At one point in the scene, after Leotardo bad-mouths Johnny Sack for crying in public, Tony says, "Comes to daughters, all bets are off. I seen tougher guys than John cry at weddings." Buscemi sidled up to the episode's writer and producer, Terence Winter. "Does Tony believe what he's saying?" he asked. No, Winter said; Tony was being diplomatic. After six years, the "Sopranos" stars know their characters intimately, but they don't necessarily understand their internal responses to each beat of dialogue. Buscemi's suggestions—like the one he whispered to James Gandolfini for this scene—were like punctuation marks in a well-turned sentence: rhythmical notations that made for tempo, nuance, and surprise.

Later in the scene, Buscemi watched as a heavyset wedding guest crossed in front of the wiseguys and added his own opinion of Johnny Sack's collapse—"Terrible out there, huh? Poor guy." The actor threw his line into the circle like a Scotsman tossing the caber; the scene suddenly stopped flowing. "Take your time coming in. You're waltzing by," Buscemi told the actor, but to no avail. Frank Vincent, who plays Phil Leotardo, kept forgetting his lines; Buscemi broke the tension by asking, "Anything else you have to say?" "It was just very funny," Abraham said. "We were all suppressing a laugh, and Steve vocalized everyone's feelings. It made the actor feel good about it. Everyone sort of enjoyed it."

When Buscemi is directing, his reputation as an actor gives him a certain authority with the cast. "It's a special event," Abraham said. "I was very impressed, on 'Pine Barrens,' with the way he worked with the actors. I think he was getting performances out of Tony Sirico and Michael Imperioli that I hadn't seen before. Their senses were heightened." Imperioli, recalling a scene in which his character was enjoying a lap dance when he was called away by some drug dealers, said, "He'll come over and say, 'Don't skim over this moment—play this moment. You should do it like you're a little disappointed to have to do business.' I'm like, 'How can I have missed that?' He constantly makes me feel I'm not doing my job properly."

In the course of fifteen setups in a twelve-hour day, Buscemi chipped away at five pages of script. In one scene, he cut a character's exit lines and instead let the camera play silently on his tortured face. For a scene in which Johnny Sack's daughter leaves her party, Buscemi coaxed Vince Curatola, who plays Johnny, to be a noisier presence: "Try to get contrast—the higher the happiness, the bigger the impact of the tears." Then he took Curatola aside to talk him into the mood for his emotional breakdown. "He wanted everything to go right for his daughter," Buscemi told him. "It's all being ruined. It could be his last six hours." Buscemi walked over to the fountain in the middle of the restaurant's driveway and watched Curatola work. "The more I direct—even though I get frustrated—I don't take it as personally as I used to," he said. "I used to think I wasn't fast enough or smart enough. I'm enjoying myself a lot more. I'm getting closer to what I always wanted: to enjoy directing as much as acting."

Later that evening, Buscemi and Winter made their way to the makeup trailer to inspect the scars being designed for Tony Soprano. "This is where Jimmy would be now," the makeup artist, Kymbra Callaghan-Kelley, said, referring to Gandolfini and holding out a reddish scar that looked like a sutured anchovy. "From the time he was sewn up, he was in the hospital two weeks," Buscemi said. "I thought what a plastic surgeon does is more refined than this." Callaghan-Kelley insisted that the scar was elegant; for comparison, she offered to show him the abdominal scar from her fibroid operation. "I had a plastic surgeon do this," Buscemi said, pointing to an almost invisible long white mark on his jawline. "When I had that knifing thing." (In 2001, on location in North Carolina for "Domestic Disturbance," Buscemi broke up a bar fight between the actor Vince Vaughn and a local who claimed that Vaughn was flirting with his girlfriend; afterward, Buscemi got into a scuffle with another hothead, who pulled a hunting knife out of his boot.) On the way back to the set, I asked Buscemi how Tony Soprano had got his scar. "If we told you," he said, "you wouldn't get out of here alive."

All the characters whose stories Buscemi chooses to tell in his films share the same predicament: they are stuck in a purgatory from which they may or may not escape. The narratives compulsively return Buscemi to the unhappiness of his blue-collar youth; at the same time, they are a reminder of his triumph over it.

THE LOST SISTER

I let go the hands of the one I slept with,
the wind called, come quick, come quick,
the days are loosening like sticks in the water.

I slept the way the lonely sleep,
uncomfortable, walking through rooms of stone.
I did not come for days. In fact, they had to roll up

their white choirboy sleeves and come after me,
with a lunge of the thumb and a snap of the wrist.
My skin capitulated to the air, it became skin,

my bones fell into their dusty length,
I dropped onto surfaces shinier than I.
Nothing needs me here.

—*Meghan O'Rourke*

Last April, I sat with Buscemi in a borrowed room at the Chelsea office of InDigEnt, a production company that specializes in low-budget digital filmmaking. Buscemi was there to edit his latest feature-length directing project, "Lonesome Jim," a movie written by the first-time screenwriter James C. Strouse and starring Casey Affleck and Liv Tyler. Shot in the course of eighteen days in Goshen, Indiana, where Strouse grew up, the movie tells the story of Jim, a failed writer who is forced to move back in with his parents and work at the family factory. "The main character's very down, and things go from bad to worse," Buscemi said. "The humor is dark, deadpan." He added, "It's very hard to sustain that. We have to find out how much is too much. By taking things out, are you losing any information in the story?"

He showed me a scene in which Jim's brother Tim is coaching a basketball team of inept ten-year-old girls. At halftime, with the girls down 16–0, the brothers lean against the lockers and talk. After Jim has bemoaned his own situation for a while, Tim joins in. "I'm really unhappy. I get these feelings. Dark. Hopeless," he says. Jim commiserates. "If I were you, I'm not sure I could . . . go on," he says. "I mean, look at how far away you are from everything you'd hoped to be. Living with Mom and Dad just to cover child support, making a dollar over minimum wage at thirty-two years old. I mean, I'm a fuckup, but you're a goddam tragedy." Tim bolts from the gym, crashes his car into a tree, and ends up in the hospital. "I want it to be real," Buscemi said. "I don't want to make fun of the situation, but, at the same time, it is sort of funny to me that this guy doesn't realize that what he's saying to his brother is just horrible." He continued, "If in the script the brother had killed himself, I wouldn't have been interested in doing the movie."

On a balmy autumn afternoon, Buscemi and I took a cab to Engine Company 55, on Broome Street. Buscemi strolled around the firehouse, pointing out the Guastavino tiled ceiling and the company's motto, "Second to None," which was emblazoned on the side of a glistening fire rig. The job of an engine company, which works in tandem with a hook-and-ladder company, is specifically to put out the fire—to "put the wet stuff on the red stuff," as firefighters say. Buscemi's first fire was in a sweatshop on Canal Street. In his years on the job, he worked three of the four positions on the engine—hose, nozzle, and backup. By the time he quit, he was next in line to learn to drive the rig. At the back of the three-story firehouse was the living room, where the captain and the five firefighters who make up the company watch TV and eat. A few of the men stood around talking to Buscemi; one of them mentioned "The Sopranos" and complimented Buscemi on how effectively he'd died on the show—blown away, with bags of groceries in both hands, by Tony Soprano's shotgun blast. "I've been doing it for twenty years now," Buscemi said, of dying onscreen. "It's what I do best."

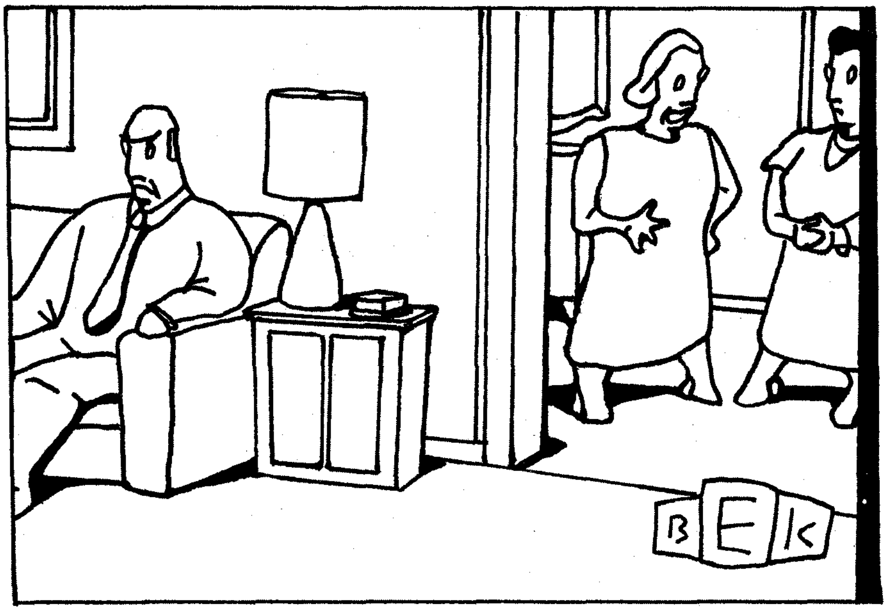
Real death, however, is a different thing. Engine Company 55 lost five men on September 11, 2001. When Buscemi talks about that day, his eyes still well up with tears. That morning, he was at the airport, intending to fly out to the Toronto Film Festival. The next day, he went down to the firehouse, where an off-duty firefighter ferrying volunteers to the Trade Center offered to drop him at the site. "I had my helmet and my old gear," Buscemi says. "He was driving me through and a cop looked at me, sort of recognized me, and just went, 'All right.' Once I was in, I was free to go anywhere I wanted." Buscemi walked around for about an hour and a half before he found his company, close to the site of the collapsed north tower. "Do you mind if I come and work with you guys?" he asked. For the next five days, working ten-hour shifts, Buscemi was part of the bucket brigade passing rubble down the line. "He'd come home covered in ash," Andres says. "The smell was so intense on him he'd take everything off at the door and try to go right in the shower." "It was like being on another planet. You had no reference for it, except for the movies," Buscemi says. "In fact, guys would come up and say, 'Is this like a movie set?' I'd say, 'Like no movie set I've ever been on.' While I was there working, I actually felt O.K. Although I hated the reason, I loved being with those guys, being on that truck, being in my gear again. I even felt guilty about it. I would say, 'Why do I feel this good?' It was because I was with them."

Afterward, however, Buscemi's emotions dipped into "uncharted territory." "I never knew when it would hit," he says. "Sometimes I'd get short with Jo or Lucian." Since then, he has become more politically active: he has fought to save firehouses and support firefighters, and before the last Presidential election, with his wife and some of his acting cohorts, he worked to register voters in a number of swing states. In 2002, when Alexandre Rockwell asked him for help getting in touch with Hollywood stars to raise money for his new film, Buscemi was uncharacteristically brusque. "You know, with all the funerals I've gone to and the things I've seen, I really don't give a shit about all this Hollywood stuff," he said.

Still, Buscemi's celebrity has earned him a certain amount of commercial and social clout. Over the years, he has gone target-shooting with William S. Burroughs (a framed bull's-eye hangs in his office, with the author's inscription: ".45 Long Colt, S & W. The gun you can't miss with"); he has attended Paul McCartney's and Elvis Costello's weddings. At the 2003 I.F.P. Gotham Awards, where he was honored for his contribution to New York's filmmaking community, Buscemi thanked Jerry Bruckheimer, the producer of Hollywood blockbusters. Bruckheimer "has made it possible for me to do so many independent films," Buscemi said, rubbing his fingers together. (The paycheck for his role in Bruckheimer's 1998 movie "Armageddon" also made it possible for Buscemi to buy a retreat in upstate New York.)

Buscemi lives a modest life in an immodest business. To protect his privacy, he has his mail delivered to another address. Since Andres discovered fans rooting through their garbage, he has shredded all his sensitive correspondence. The cordon sanitaire is sometimes breached, however. Not long ago, a young girl left a note on his door that read, "I saw Adam Sandler in L.A. riding a bicycle with no helmet. Please tell Adam to wear a helmet."

Most nights, Buscemi and Andres like to play Scrabble at the round kitchen table. And Buscemi spends as much time with his tall, frizzy-haired son as the fourteen-year-old will allow. The long living room of the Buscemi home has been ceded mostly to Lucian's guitars and computer. (Lucian plays bass in his band, STUNGUN.) Many of the images on the walls were found in thrift shops; a Victrola sits in the dining room, with the theme music for "Juliet of the Spirits" permanently on its turntable. At the other end of the living room is a television with a purple parasol—a friend's art work—hung above it. Across from the TV, under a doe-eyed photograph of Lucian as a little boy, there is a green sofa. Here father and son have contests to see who can throw the other onto the floor first. "He's tough, but I hold my own pretty well," Buscemi says. "When he was little, I used to let him win, but now he can kick my ass." According to Andres, sometimes, out of the blue, from the middle of the room, Buscemi and Lucian will "just dive onto the couch." "Nothing too fancy or daring," Buscemi insists, but, like so much of his life, it's a leap nonetheless. ♦



"He's fine as long as I take my medication."

FICTION

THE BEST YEAR OF MY LIFE

BY PAUL THEROUX

UELVE!
ANITA
LA
RFANITA
RO DEL STIC

I got the appalling news as the whole family watched, all of them chewing and gabbling at the kitchen table, near where the phone hung on the wall. It was a few days before Christmas, so everyone was at home, all six of my siblings, the entire cast assembled at the footlights for this—not tragedy, since tragedy seldom visits the young—this cruel farce. I had just turned nineteen.

So the best year of my life began in the worst way, further proof of the sadism of fate, which only served to convince me that someone somewhere was enjoying my pain—a merciless plotter, perhaps one of Mother's wickeder allies, if not Mother herself.

"It's for you," Mother said, handing me the receiver.

My whole life was about to change: I was going to step into a hole and spend a year in the dark. Typical, I thought, for my life as I lived it then—in bewilderment, frowning at the futility and resenting the squandered time as it unrolled and flapped around me—seemed ragged and plotless: random, rancorous, out of my control, meandering from disorder to chaos, in the general direction of oblivion. In retrospect, from the vantage point of late middle age—from the helpful heights and clear air that are part of aging's greatest consolations—I see that my life was in fact closely plotted and consequential, with the structural elaboration and subtle motifs of a Victorian novel, interwoven with grace notes, subplots, and coincidences that stretched credulity and yet were inevitable. This life of mine—perhaps all lives?—suffered from an excess of design: nothing was random, nothing wasted. The hole I'd stepped into was a magical thoroughfare that carried me to the future.

Though, as I say, at the time it all appeared to be an aimless monochrome of regret and shame, wrong turns and pointless effort. Whatever befell me, my mother's shrill cry was always: *It's your own goddam fault!* That blame rang in my head for years. Decades after this particular disgrace, when other troubles came my way, I was able to say, "I've seen worse"—and really mean it. Much worse than being thirty, with a wife and two small children and no money and recently fired from my teaching job in Singapore, struggling to find a house to live in; worse than being fucked up and far from home in India, or lost in China, or hard up and buried alive in London; worse than being cuckolded; worse than hearing "I'm leaving you and I've found someone else" in a stifling and pissy phone booth on a crackling receiver stinking of cigarettes; worse than the miserable litigation of (so it seemed) the death sentence of divorce, or losing that house I had struggled to find earlier in this paragraph; worse still than the loss of my father, for an old man's death is a natural process, even if it has been hastened by a nagging wife and a quarrelling family—worse than anything I was ever to know. This disgrace was entirely a young man's stupidity, as Mother was to remind me again and again: *all my own goddam fault.*

That year, I was at college in Amherst most of the time, but back home in Medford for vacations, still one of the family, working to pay my way through tuition bills, travel bills, food bills, room bills.

"It's for you," Mother said again, angry now, because in my reverie I had not taken the phone from her.

No matter who was closest to the phone, Mother, our gatekeeper, was the one who answered it. All calls were routed through her, and she insisted on a short cord to keep us visible and audible when we were speaking.

"A girl," Mother explained to the rest of the table.

Father took his cue. He bit the meat off his fork and said, "Some dizzy blonde."

"Jay?"

Mona's voice was flattened, drained of vitality, but with an insinuating weight to it, a desperate muscle of sound, commanding me to listen.

"Hi, there," I said cheerily, to throw my family off, because all eight of them were holding their knives and forks upright, no longer chewing, so that they could hear better.

"I missed my period. It's been three weeks. I don't know what to do. I'm a wreck"—her voice began to falter and break—"and you don't even care!"

"Yes," I said, my voice high and insincere, "I do," and I could see Mother squinting at me, "as a matter of fact." I stayed jaunty for the sake of the table. "I'll see you in a few days."

"No! Tomorrow! It has to be tomorrow. This is serious." Mona began to cry, snorting and croaking in a way that stung my ear and rang against the fragile skull box of my brain.

As I hung up, cutting off Mona's yell of complaint, I prepared a smile for the table, and turned to their silent faces. Even four-year-old Gilbert had stopped yammering. My eyes were glazed. I shrugged fatuously.

"Who was that?" Mother asked.

"Nobody you know," I said. "Nobody special."

Floyd said, "Oh, sure. I believe that. Indubitably."

"Jay's got a girlfriend," Hubby said, in the slow husky voice of a young boy with a throat full of food. "And I know why."

Fat Franny, who often asked Mother's questions for her, said, "Why?"

"So he can look at her panties."

Rose said, "Don't be fresh."

Mother smiled grimly at Father. "Are you going to let him get away with that insolence?"

Father set down his fork with a click, and swung. Both Fred and Floyd leaned back out of the way as Father caught Hubby's head with the meat of his hand, knocking him sideways off his chair. As the blow connected, Father, overtaken by pity, reached for Hubby's arm to break his fall, but in his frantic clumsiness crushed him against the radiator instead, so that Hubby scorched his arm and howled.

"Kids wreck a marriage," Father said, for Mother's sake.

"Eat," Mother said to me, because I was goggling at Hubby's reddened arm. "Your dinner's getting cold."

In a moralizing voice, Fred, the eldest, said, "I always tell people not to call me at mealtime."

"That's the way it should be," Mother said.

I had the sense that they suspected something, that the panic and shame showed on my face. But, really, it was all too dreadful for even my family to guess.

Nobody special, I had said; and in fact Mona had become nobody special. Until I heard her voice on the phone, she had almost faded from my mind. A month or so before, I'd seen her for what I thought would be the last time. She lived in a rented room in a big frame house near the center of town, across the road from Emily Dickinson's

CHARLES HARBUTT, "NITA LA FANITA" (1984)/ACTUALITY INC.

house. Our relationship was ending, and I'd visited her to say goodbye. We'd made love, in a joyless ceremony of farewell. I was so inept a lover that I never feared the worst. Pregnancies, I felt, were the result of passion and experience; I was too tentative and unconfident to accomplish such a thing, barely penetrating Mona while she squirmed in frustration, as though I were merely chafing at her, approximating the act.

I'd first noticed Mona the previous spring, walking through the cafeteria, dressed like a scullery maid in a brown uniform and cap and an apron. Later, I saw her behind the counter, serving mashed potatoes with her right hand, ladling gravy with her left. The diners were all, like me, dormitory students. I loved her simple scowling good looks, the loose lock of blond hair at the rim of her cap, her neat narrow nose and skeptical lips, skinny shoulders, and thin fingers. She was beautiful. I took her for an unimpressed townie. Such a person could seem to me aloof and unapproachable; even a dishwasher could strike me as haughty. I had no idea that Mona was actually an honors student, a junior, two years older than me. I watched her at the cafeteria for a month or more, but never saw her smile. I found her sulks arousing.

Then one night I saw her in a bar—she was drinking with friends—and I got up the nerve to speak to her. Her friends left. Drinking seemed to make us equals. She said, "You think you're so smart," when I expressed an opinion—I was quoting "Les Fleurs du Mal"; Baudelaire was my hero then. But she liked the fact that I worked weekends at the university chicken farm, scraping and hosing down the cages. "Everyone else is at the football game," she said, sharing her contempt with me. I could see that, for all her severity, she was on my side, a fellow-worker, paying her own way, and perhaps even oppressed by a mother like mine.

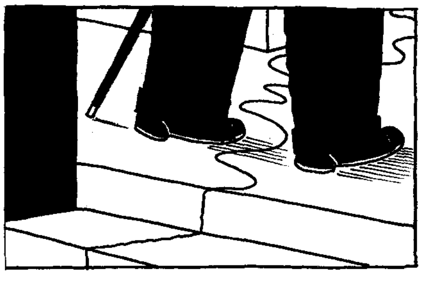
A week or so later, she sneaked me into her room. We lay on her bed, looking at Emily Dickinson's house, and I recited "Wild Nights—Wild Nights!" We made love. She could tell that I was new to the act. When she found out how old I was, she berated me—she had been drinking—for having deceived her. Still, we met in her room a few more times before deciding not to see each other again. That was before Thanksgiving. Now it was almost Christmas, which was why the phone call ("I missed my period") had been so unexpected.

Mona's family lived in another suburb of Boston, a long slow bus ride through streets of dirty ice and soot-crusted snow. As soon as I arrived, she said, "I haven't told anyone. I can't tell my parents—they'd kill me. You're the only person who knows. You have to help me."

This desperate little speech became an unwelcome refrain. Each time she called—which was almost every day ("It's *her* again," Mother intoned)—I hoped for her to say, "At last!" But she never did. Her frequent letters ("Another one for you," Mother said. "Is it *her*?") were long and gloomy, accusatory and self-lacerating. *Why did I ever let myself get involved with an upstart like you?* I was still technically a teen-ager. Baudelaire mocked me with his cynical worldliness. I burned Mona's letters.

Weeks passed. It was January, and Mona was two months along. Still, every phone call or letter raised my hopes and in the same instant sank them. I was back in my dorm room. I woke up each morning dazed and sometimes happy, believing for a brief moment that my predicament had been only a bad dream; I prayed for good news, but nothing changed. And it was worse for Mona by far. I was her only confidant, the only person who could share the burden of her misery.

My brother Fred was in law school in New York City. New York was the wider world, I told myself; people had the solutions to pregnancies there. I visited him in February, staying at his apartment and going to doctors' offices—just dropping in. *Do you have an appointment?* I had no idea how these things worked; I knew that abortion was illegal. I never saw a doctor, which was probably a good thing, because how would I have asked the crucial question?



"Oh, God," Fred said, when I finally confessed. "Oh, Jesus." He held his head. His wavy Brylcreemed hair looked frivolous in his whitened fingers. He said, "You'll have to tell Dad and Ma."

"No," I said. Fred's gasping panic frightened me. "They won't be able to help. They won't know what to do. They'll go nuts." I could already hear them. I knew every word of accusation they would utter.

Inert, scandalized, feeling complicit because he knew everything, Fred demanded that I leave New York. Though I was hurt, I was not surprised. This was *my* problem. And, besides, it was painful being in New York, among the rich, whom I envied and hated, for being able to solve problems like mine with just a wink and an envelope full of money.

Sometime in March, I moved in to Mona's little off-campus room. She was kinder to me than she had been before. She said, "I need you now. See me through this and I'll never ask anything more of you. Do you understand? I don't want to marry you. I just want to have the baby."

"And then what?"

"Give it away," she said, blinking at her tears. "Put it up for adoption. There are agencies."

I was not shocked. This was a simple desperate act, like a crime. The main problem was how to get away with it.

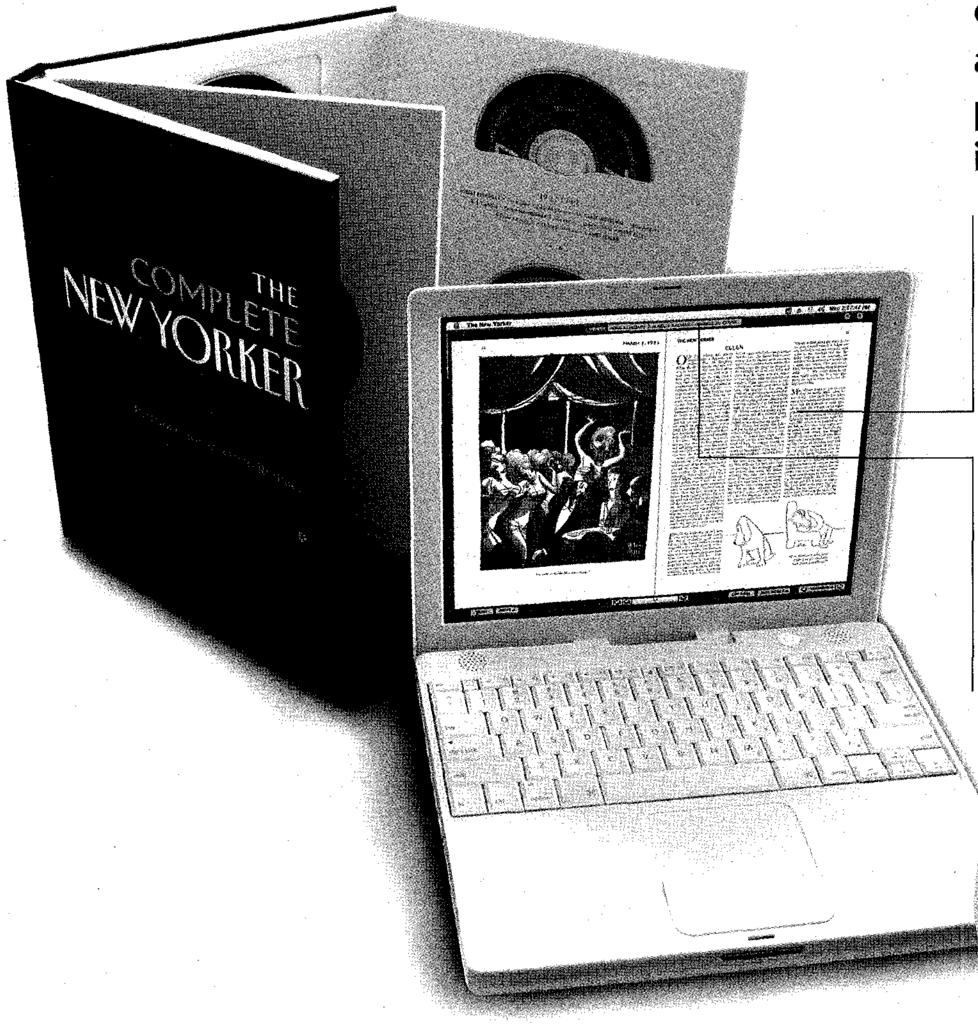
Mona pushed her knuckles against her eyes and became stern. "If my family finds out, I'm dead."

Mona stopped going to classes. She got a job at a greenhouse in the countryside beyond campus, growing roses. In this way, she kept out of sight. I studied, I did my work, I grew to hate Baudelaire, and I worried all day. Though I still attended lectures and wrote papers and read the required books, I did so in a detached, almost disembodied way, as another person—younger and much simpler than the fellow who woke appalled each day and comforted Mona. Writing home, repeating platitudes about the weather and my studies, I was someone else again, guarded, and yet an earnest member of the family.

That was three people. But I was another man, too: the asparagus picker. I got a job on a work crew for the asparagus harvest. I'd heard about this opportu-

THE COMPLETE NEW YORKER

4,109 issues.
Half a million
pages. Yours to
search and savor.



Every article, every cartoon, every illustration, every advertisement, exactly as it appeared on the printed page, in full color.

Flip through the magazine or zoom in on a single page. Print any pages or covers you choose, or bookmark pages with your own notes.

Search hundreds of thousands of article abstracts and keywords. Browse the complete works of your favorite contributor or all the Profiles or fiction from a given year.

ON EIGHT DVD-ROMS
FOR MAC AND PC

View an online demonstration at archive.newyorker.com
Available at thenewyorkerstore.com and wherever books are sold.

Sleep Better Tonight!

Sealy

It's made for Sleep. It's a Sealy.

Firm or Plush - Queen set

$599.99

•FAST Delivery

•300 locations nationwide

•Shop by phone or online 24/7

1800Posture.com

1-800-767-8873

The Companion to the PBS Series

IN SEARCH OF MYTHS AND HEROES

Exploring Four Epic Legends of the World

By MICHAEL WOOD

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

www.ucpress.edu

Aisle 9

Good Things in Store

Arzberg GERMANY

aisle9.com

imported selections for the home.

The Unity Bracelet

Taoism Hinduism Christianity Judaism Islam Buddhism

Six Faiths — One God

Sterling Silver $225 and 14K Gold $995

www.4wardthink.com 800-488-7009

THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE

"America's Book of Kells."

Newsweek

www.sjbible.org

nity from another hard-up student and was welcomed by the farmer, who needed men. The crop was early, and it looked strange to me. Eight-inch spears of asparagus had appeared in clusters all over the wide, bare fields—no leaves, no foliage, just slender, sharp-pointed shoots. I crouched with a dozen field hands, poking my cutter into the earth, severing the spears a few inches below ground level. All the other men were Spanish-speaking, most of them young. They cut the asparagus, muttering to one another, sometimes laughing, as they loaded the boxes and swung them onto the flatbed of the trailer. They did not talk to me except when we were in the back of the truck, riding to a new field.

Then they told me that they were from Puerto Rico and that they spent eight months of the year as migrants, moving slowly north from Florida and Georgia, harvesting whatever was ripe—oranges, peaches, blueberries, sweet corn, tomatoes. They were polite, even pleasant, to me when they found out that I could speak some Spanish. The sunny Puerto Rico they evoked seemed remote and exotic. They cut cane and picked pineapples there. They missed their wives and girlfriends, they said. In September or October, they would go back with the money they'd earned.

"*Isla bonita*," I said.

"*Isla barata!*" one man replied. And the others chipped in, giving me examples of how cheap it was to live in Puerto Rico.

I picked asparagus every morning for three weeks, until, in mid-May, Mona, who was swollen and obviously pregnant, said, "My parents are asking when I'm coming home. They might visit. We have to get out of here."

We took a bus to New York, where I phoned Fred. I had not dared to call ahead, fearing that he would have time to think of an excuse to rebuff us. We had nowhere else to go. Two days there proved to me that Fred didn't want us. He did not want to know so much. He was fretting again, worrying me with his fear.

He said, "See, what you need is a plan."

I saw a sign in a store window: "San Juan $49." It seemed simple. I had the money. I remembered all the shouts of "*Más barata*." We flew to Puerto Rico and stayed at a cheap hotel for the first few nights, then got a room with a balcony in a tall house in Old San Juan. Though it had been a rash decision, it seemed workable. We felt safe on this island; it was as though we had dreamed it.

It was my first experience of the way travel can turn you into a new person. Away from Fred and our families, we felt older, independent, unobserved. By leaving we had removed ourselves from a dreary reality of intrusions into our world. When people ask you questions you can't answer, I thought, find new people. We were almost happy in our remoteness, among people who seemed worse off than we were, in a disorderly place that matched my mood. We had enough money to last a month. In the meantime, I would look for a job.

"I'm working on a freighter," I wrote home. "We've just docked in San Juan. I'll be home in August or September."

That was yet another person: the deckhand. Mother accepted this lame explanation. Because I was not asking her for anything, she was complacent, or perhaps she was preoccupied—all those children. She had little curiosity about me. She was probably just reassured to hear that I was taking care of myself.

The Caribe Hilton in Puerta de Tierra was looking for help. I applied for a job as a lifeguard, but when the personnel officer heard me speak English he suggested that I apply to the restaurant instead. The customers were mostly English-speaking tourists. I got the job.

I worked from six in the evening until midnight, when I took the bus back to Old San Juan. Now I had a salary. Mona signed up for Spanish classes. She was too big, too hot, too uncomfortable to attempt more than that.

The Puerto Ricans were kind to us. They had two faces: the dutiful solemn and submissive one they presented to gringos—"Anything you say, boss!" (I recognized this from the asparagus fields)—and the noisy, mischievous, helpful face they saved for one another. They treated Mona and me as members of the family. Accustomed to messy problems, they did not ask for explanations. I was grateful, though it took me a while to understand that the reason they were kind was that they saw a young pale pregnant woman and an even younger man—probably not her husband—riding the buses, sitting in the plaza, coming in and out of the stairway of an old building near the expensive restaurant La Zaragozana, where we never ate. They sympathized.

My family believed that I was working on a ship. Mona had told her family that she was teaching school in New York City. No one would find out the truth. We were too far away. Mona's mail was sent care of Fred, who forwarded it to her in weekly bundles.

And so two months passed.

The strangeness of San Juan consoled me. The Puerto Ricans took us on faith: not a single soul knew us. I loved that anonymity, which was also a sort of innocence. Here I was just a skinny boy who lived in a room on Calle San Francisco, with a pregnant young woman, and who set off from the plaza at five every evening on the bus to Isla Verde and the Caribe Hilton. We ate soup from a can at almost every meal. At night, when we switched on the light, glossy purplish cockroaches scuttled across the floor. Dust and noise filled the air; the street seemed to pass through the tall windows of our room; even the sea brimmed at our windows. But no one knew us, so there was no shame, only the tedious struggle we shared with everyone else.

Now and then it rained hard—brief summer downpours. I carried an umbrella and wore a panama hat—these were affectations; I was pretending to be seedy. I was reading Graham Greene and Lawrence Durrell. I learned enough Spanish that I seldom needed to speak English. I practiced the Puerto Rican accent, swallowing the "s," *meemo* for *mismo*, and chewing the "y," *joe* for *yo*. I felt that no one saw me until I got to the restaurant, and I discovered that I was almost invisible there, too: I was just a uniform jacket and shirt and bow tie. My job was to take reservations on the phone, to show diners to their tables, to distribute menus, to wish them a pleasant evening. For this I was paid enough to cover the rent and food for Mona and me, and to put a little extra away for our return. Now I understood how a rash decision could become a whole, irreversible life.

Mona weakened, as though her pregnancy were an illness, and she looked at our little room with homesick eyes. She woke in the middle of the night and sobbed. Her ankles swelled. She developed heat rash. Now and then she raged at me, "How did I ever get involved with you!" Or she said, "You are all I have. Please don't leave me. Just see me through to the end."

These were like lines in a play I had wandered into, one of those anxious dreams from the deep end. And, as in one of those dreams, where everything that occurs is unexpected yet absurdly logical, I seemed to be leading someone else's life.

One day, I was late for work. I said to the restaurant manager, "I'm sorry I'm late. My wife is sick—she's pregnant."

He was from Peru and his beaky nose and hard jaw and hooded eyes gave him the look of an Inca chief. He stared at me with a seriousness that made me uncomfortable. Then he tapped my shoulder.

"Don't say 'I'm sorry.' Never say sorry." He wagged his finger. "A man doesn't say sorry." A few days later he said, "How is your wife? Better, I hope."

I gave him an answer but did not know what I was saying or who was speaking. I thought, I am whoever you take me to be. I am living five lives at once, and in one of them, of course, I am also working on a freighter. None of these lives represented the person I knew myself to be.

Mona and I saved whatever we could, so we had no spare money. We were like everyone else we saw in San Juan: walking, riding the bus, eating the deep-fried meat pies they called *pastelillos*, treating ourselves to ice cream, going to bed early. We had no telephone, no radio. The TV in the bar on the corner was tuned to soccer and boxing matches. We never read the newspaper, though I sometimes glanced at the headlines in the daily *El Imparcial*. We had no idea what was happening in the world beyond Puerto Rico. One day, the landlady told us that the dictator Trujillo had been assassinated in Santo Domingo, and the drama of this news made our nearby plaza festive with the laughter of chattering men.

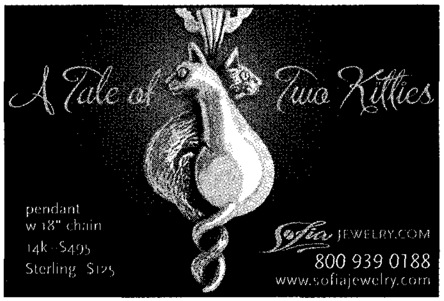
I grew fond of the disorder that concealed us, the friendly crowds, the narrow sidewalks, even the heat and the sunshine

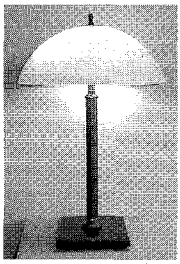
2006 PROGRAMS
TRAVEL *with* SCHOLARS

Oxford/Berkeley *July 3-22*
Live in a beautiful, historic college; choose from 11 small group seminars taught by English dons.
The Paris Program *July 16-29*
Choose one of three courses in the art, history, and architecture of Paris.
London Theater *July 10-29*
Vietnam and Cambodia: The Khmers and the Chams *May 15-June 5*
Italy and the Renaissance *June 11-24*
Ireland's Literature and History *June 18-July 1*
Galapagos Islands: The Politics of Preserving Paradise *September 4-16*
Burgundy: Medieval History in France's Romanesque Period *September 6-15*

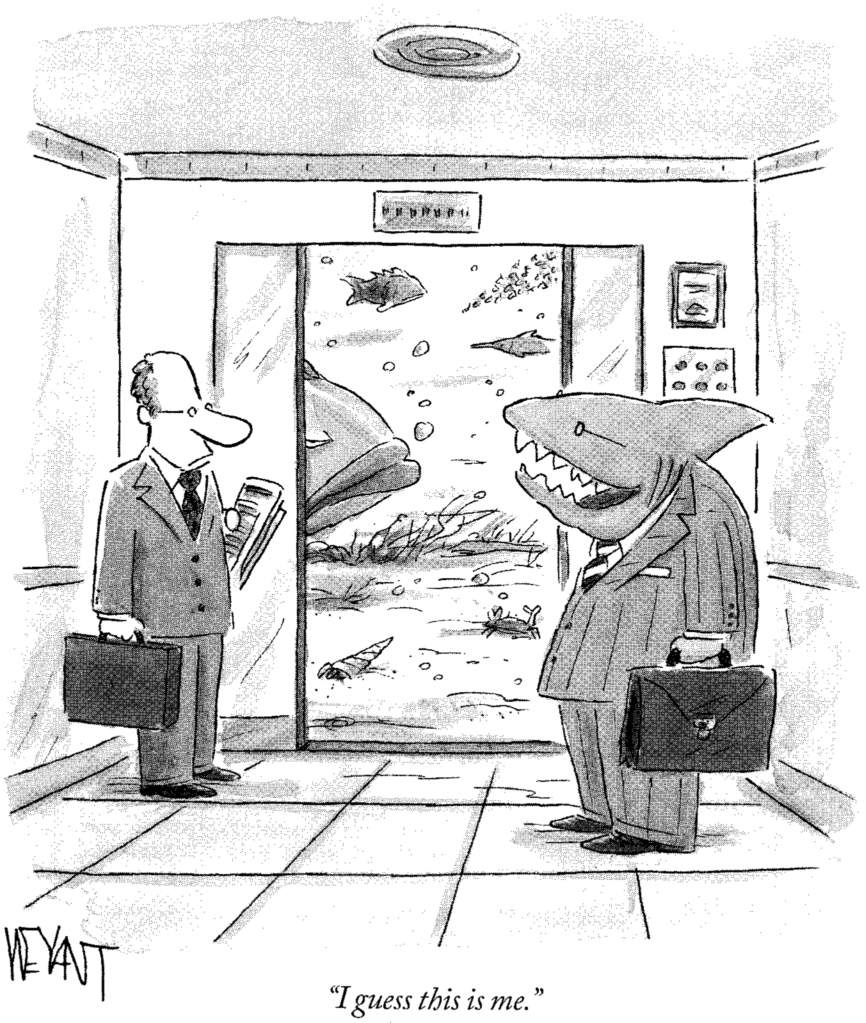
510-642-3824 or 1-888-209-7344 ext. 719
www.unex.berkeley.edu/welcome/tws3

UC Berkeley Extension




CLASSIC LIBRARY LAMP
ADJUSTABLE Table & Desk Lamp
Bronze with SLATE base
Opal White Glass Shade
Height (Adj): 20" to 26"
Standard Bulbs (2-60 Watt)
Dimmer Switch
$109.00
2 for $199.00
shipping $12.00 each
Mail or Phone Orders
NEW HAVEN LIGHTING 800 243 3123
PO Box 6353 Hamden, CT 06517
WWW.NEWHAVENLIGHTING.COM

Greek Fisherman's Cap $22
85% Wool, 15% Nylon • Sizes 6¾-8
Black, Navy, Grey, Brown
Check or Credit Card w/Exp. Date.
Add $2 shipping per order
www.johnhelmer.com
John Helmer • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. N115 • Portland, OR 97205



"I guess this is me."

that seemed to soothe people and soften their mood. I was at home amid the cracked yellow stucco, the scrawled-on walls, in the slum beyond the battlements of the city wall called La Perla—the Pearl—where people were much worse off than we were: barefoot children, ragged women, drunken men.

One day, I saw a man I recognized from a provocative political lecture he had given in Amherst, at the time when Mona and I were living together there. He was William Sloane Coffin, a well-known radical, walking with two other men. They pushed past us, talking, and entered La Zaragozana, and, because that was a restaurant we couldn't afford, I stopped viewing him as a radical. He was a privileged man from the other world.

I wrote a few more dispatches home, explaining that my ship, the freighter, was in port. I fictionalized myself as a seaman, all of the details secondhand from my reading of Kerouac. Mona wrote regularly to her family, sending the letters to Fred, who stamped and mailed them.

And every morning I woke up from a deep sleep with a film of damp heat on my face and remembered that I was living with Mona, who was pregnant, in a room in Old San Juan, and that I was due at work at the Hilton at five-thirty; and I went numb, thinking, Hold on, stay calm, the days are passing, no one knows. There was a baby in Mona; there was a darkness inside me, and a woeful weight on my soul. My thoughts were for Mona and myself, but the woe was: my family must not find out about this shameful wicked business.

Mona was obsessed by the same need for concealment. This need made us quieter, gentler with each other, like a pair of felons, moving with stealth, lying low to avoid detection: fugitives from justice. We never ceased to think of ourselves as sneaks, and though we talked about the pregnancy, we seldom spoke of the baby, except as a problem we were trying to solve.

One day in August, Mona got a letter from an agency in Boston with the pitiful name the Home for Little Wanderers. The message was that they would accept Mona, see her through the birth of the baby, and then take the child. Hopeful families were waiting for such children. *Please rest assured that we will find a loving home for your child.* Mona cried at the letter, but admitted that it was what she wanted: a relief.

She woke that night sobbing, because she had just realized that since we both wore glasses the child would have bad eyes. The thought of sending this myopic child groping into a world of strangers was unbearable.

We bought tickets to Boston. I told the Peruvian manager that I would be leaving. He said, "Just as I was getting used to you."

"*Lo siento*," I said, as a joke.

A few days before we left San Juan, the landlady handed us a letter with an American stamp and the Calle San Francisco address—not a letter forwarded from Fred. It was from Mona's mother. "We know everything," it began. Mona's father had gone to New York, to Fred's apartment. He had asked to see his daughter. Fred had told him the whole story and then given him our address. "Dad's on the warpath," Mona's mother wrote, "and so is Jay's family. I had a long talk with them."

The next days were tense. We half expected Mona's father to descend on us. But of course we were too far away. Going to San Juan had been a leap in the dark, but it had saved us. No one came. We left for Boston one hot night. We had taken all our things—pots, towels, sheets—to La Perla, and put them in the arms of a grateful woman.

Mona sat awkwardly on the plane, eight months pregnant. We arrived in Boston at dawn, and had breakfast in a diner on Boylston Street, then walked into the Public Garden. I had got used to walking very slowly with Mona at my side. Mona said that she felt sick. She sat down on a bench and vomited onto the grass. I held her as she wiped her mouth on my shoulder. And she leaned against me, heavy with trust and resignation. We were like lovers on that hot August morning. At nine o'clock, we walked to the street and hailed a cab.

"Don't come with me," she said. She was sparing me. She got in and told the driver to take her to the Home for Little Wanderers. "Joy Street," she added. The names snatched at my heart.

I called home from a phone booth at Sullivan Square, and took the bus to Elm Street, walking up the long hill to my house, dizzy from the heat and my sleepless night on the plane. From all my other lives, I was returning to the one that I hated, and I dreaded what was to come.

With heavy feet I scuffed up the wooden stairs to the porch, announcing myself on the planks. The front door was open. No one came to greet me. The screen door slapped shut on its spring, the coil lashing the doorframe. I was aware of the wooden steps, the wooden porch, the wooden door as the splintery portal to the Day of Judgment.

"In here," Mother called from the kitchen.

She was seated grimly with her arms on the kitchen table. Floyd sat in a chair at the far wall, trying not to smile, though he did so, horribly, half gloating, half in pity. Then he crept out of the room, and his eyes said, *You're in for it.*

Mother's face was hawklike, her nose pinched, her lips compressed. "Well!" She seemed to be staring me down, and at last she said, with a screech of triumphant sarcasm, "I hope you're proud of yourself."

I hung my head as she berated me.

"And look at your jacket." She scowled at the vomit stain on my shoulder.

The next days and weeks were easier, because Mona and I had managed to conceal the final deceits of our crime—we ourselves thought of it that way; it was something much worse than an error. Only I knew where she was, and I visited her secretly. She was impatient; holding my hand, she said, "I think it'll be soon."

The family that would adopt the child took her to the hospital for the birth—it was a boy. I visited her, I held the baby—a boy with a reddened and contented face. The second time I went to the hospital, Mona said, "The other mothers were laughing after you left. They said, 'How old is he? He's just a kid!' "

I saw the baby only once. And I did not see Mona again until after she had left the hospital. It was late September and we were back in Amherst, two students again, altered, burdened with the sad story of a lost boy which we could not tell anyone. I was sad but relieved; Mona was simply sad. Some nights she begged me to come to her room, just to hold her while she sobbed. We lay clothed in her narrow bed.

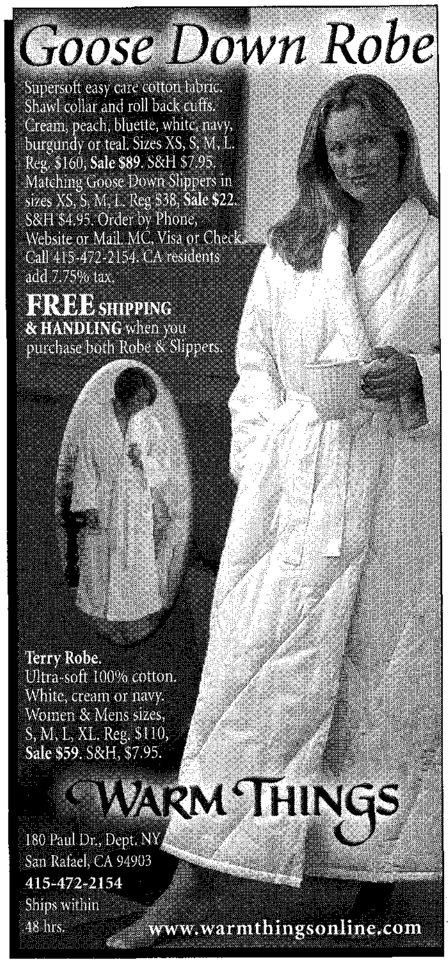
I turned twenty. Mona graduated early, in January, and went away to teach. She wrote a few times, then stopped writing altogether.

I somehow knew that I would never again feel so desperate, so despised, so weak and blamed as I had that year. And I was right. The experience did not make me strong but it gave me a vivid memory of helplessness that I carried with me through my life, a reference point for any other hardship I faced. Sometimes, in a dilemma, I smiled. Someone would say to me, "You're not going to like what I'm about to tell you." But, remembering that year, I knew that I could take it.

As for the child, wherever he was, he was better off. Now and then I dreamed that he had found me, and cornered me, and was screaming at me for what I had done—for the fate that I had assigned to him.

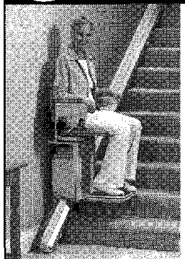
Sometimes people speak of an illness they had in childhood, when they read a great deal or learned a language, or of how they gained a skill after a terrible accident. It was like that. I had learned to live by my wits: to survive, to trust my instincts, to be secretive. I knew that my life was elsewhere. I had been right to suspect, long before Mona's first phone call, that I could not rely on my family, that whatever they knew of me they would use against me, to undermine me.

Afterward, I never went into details with anyone. I could not bear to. *The worst year of my life,* I used to moan, but as time passed I grew to know it, for all its struggle, as a great year. This whole plot—the beginning, the middle, and the end—had been lived before by others, but I had had to live through it myself to understand it, to know that agony can be an analgesic, that the memory of pain can itself be a painkiller. That year made the rest of my life easier. ♦



Goose Down Robe
Supersoft easy care cotton fabric. Shawl collar and roll back cuffs. Cream, peach, bluette, white, navy, burgundy or teal. Sizes XS, S, M, L. Reg. $160, **Sale $89**. S&H $7.95. Matching Goose Down Slippers in sizes XS, S, M, L. Reg $38, **Sale $22**. S&H $4.95. Order by Phone, Website or Mail. MC, Visa or Check. Call 415-472-2154. CA residents add 7.75% tax.
FREE SHIPPING & HANDLING when you purchase both Robe & Slippers.
Terry Robe. Ultra-soft 100% cotton. White, cream or navy. Women & Mens sizes, S, M, L, XL. Reg. $110, **Sale $59**. S&H, $7.95.
WARM THINGS
180 Paul Dr., Dept. NY
San Rafael, CA 94903
415-472-2154
Ships within 48 hrs.
www.warmthingsonline.com

Glide upstairs on a Stannah Stairlift



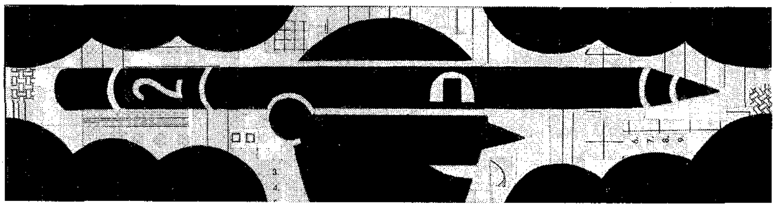
- Enjoy the full use of your own home
- Ideal for narrow stairs with tight turns
- Many models and payment options
- A family business since 1862

800-877-8247 or www.stannah.com

JOHN ♆ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
Anniversary Date
IN ROMAN NUMERALS!
December 11, 1998
XII XI MCMXCVIII
Convert Your Date Online!
14K GOLD FROM $550 - 3 DAY RUSH AVAILABLE - FREE CATALOGUE
RINGBOX.COM 1-888-646-6466

10 Million Pieces!
China, Crystal, Silver, Collectibles
183,000 Patterns • Old/New • Buy/Sell
REPLACEMENTS, LTD.®
1-800-REPLACE (1-800-737-5223)
PO Box 26029, Greensboro, NC 27420 • Dept YO
www.replacements.com®

THE CRITICS



BOOKS

A MAN WHO WASN'T THERE

The clandestine greatness of Javier Marías.

BY WYATT MASON

Vladimir Nabokov, upbraiding a poet friend for writing a newspaper column, declared, "I am writing my novel. I do not read the papers." Though it wouldn't have been out of character for Nabokov to tax the truth for the sake of a memorable line, it is true that American literary novelists, whether they read the papers or not, typically do not write for them, except in the book-review pages. An op-ed by Michael Chabon may pop up now and again, but it is hard to imagine Philip Roth or even Norman Mailer supplying a weekly column on politics or current affairs.

In Madrid, however, the Spanish novelist Javier Marías does just that. Every week for more than a decade, he has addressed a readership of millions, on politics or art or whatever else might have caught his eye. Although such a prominent byline may help explain the success of his fiction in Spain, it doesn't account for the five million books of his that are in print in some forty countries around the world. To an unusual degree, Marías manages to inhabit not only the popular but also the literary sphere, counting J. M. Coetzee, Salman Rushdie, and the late W. G. Sebald among his admirers. Although Marías's following in the United States is still small—his newly published novel, "Your Face Tomorrow: Volume I, Fever and Spear" (New Directions; translated by Margaret Jull Costa; $24.95), is only the seventh of his twenty-eight books to have appeared in translation here—his name is regularly mentioned during the annual run-up to the announcement of the Nobel Prize in Literature. So it's not surprising that his prose demonstrates an unusual blend of sophistication and accessibility. The first page of his novel "Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me" (1994), for example, features this excursus on the misfortune, and humiliation, of sudden death:

> Seafood poisoning, a cigarette lit as the person is drifting off to sleep and that sets fire to the sheets or, worse, to a woollen blanket; a slip in the shower—the back of the head—the bathroom door locked; a lightning bolt that splits in two a tree planted in a broad avenue, a tree which, as it falls, crushes or slices off the head of a passer-by, possibly a foreigner; dying in your socks, or at the barber's, still wearing a voluminous smock, or in a whorehouse or at the dentist's; or eating fish and getting a bone stuck in your throat, choking to death like a child whose mother isn't there to save him by sticking a finger down his throat; or dying in the middle of shaving, with one cheek still covered in foam, half-shaven for all eternity, unless someone notices and finishes the job off out of aesthetic pity; not to mention life's most ignoble, hidden moments that people seldom mention once they are out of adolescence, simply because they no longer have an excuse to do so, although, of course, there are always those who insist on making jokes about them, never very funny jokes.

Into the two hundred and one words of this sentence, resourcefully translated by Margaret Jull Costa, Marías crams many tiny triumphs of imagination and elaboration: a slip in the shower enhanced by a locked door that protects no one; decapitation made oddly worse for happening on vacation; an incongruous postmortem shave made comically touching by the phrase "aesthetic pity"—*piedad estética*. Just as Marías's prose teems with seductions, so, too, do the stories themselves. Take the opening of his global best-seller (more than a million copies sold to German readers alone) "A Heart So White" (1992):

> I did not want to know but I have since come to know that one of the girls, when she wasn't a girl any more and hadn't long been back from her honeymoon, went into the bathroom, stood in front of the mirror, unbuttoned her blouse, took off her bra and aimed her own father's gun at her heart, her father at the time was in the living room with other members of the family and three guests. When they heard the shot, some five minutes after the girl had left the table, her father didn't get up at once, but stayed there for a few seconds, paralyzed, his mouth still full of food, not daring to chew or swallow, far less to spit the food out on to his plate; and when he finally did get up and run to the bathroom, those who followed him noticed that when he discovered the blood-splattered body of his daughter and clutched his head in his hands, he kept passing the mouthful of meat from one cheek to the other, still not knowing what to do with it.

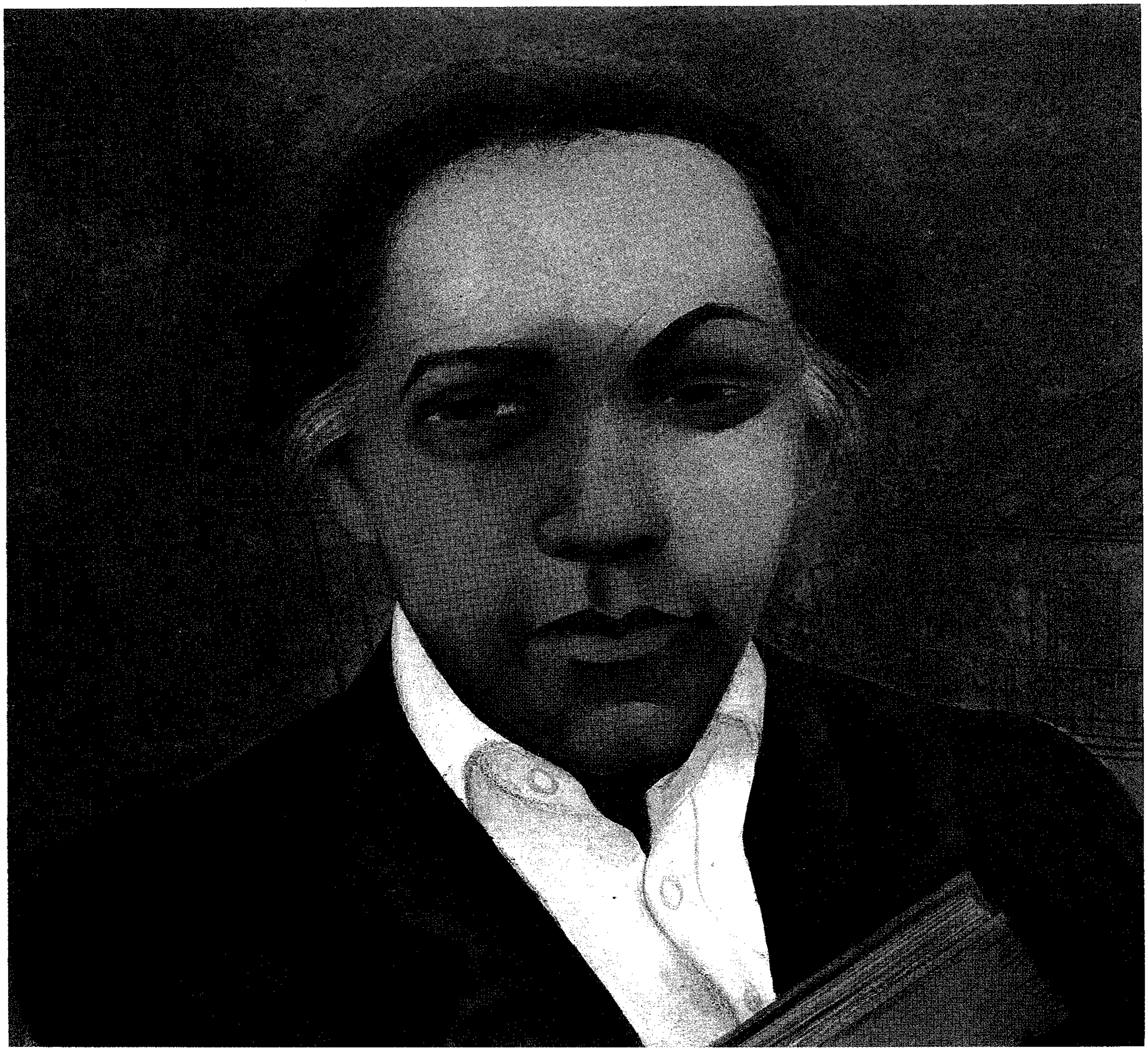
These two twisting sentences, full of qualifications and deferrals that recall the patient syntax of Henry James, pose a narrative question that the reader feels compelled to unravel: what made the girl kill herself so soon after her honeymoon?

Such plotty provocation—an act of violence disclosed up front whose true significance will not be revealed until the book's end—is a hallmark of Marías's storytelling. In the opening pages of "The Man of Feeling," the narrator, an opera singer, recalls a train journey on which he seduced a married woman while her husband was in the same compartment (the reader waits to see how he did it, and what hell he paid for having done it). In "Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me," a ghostwriter tells of an affair he almost has with a married woman—almost, because the woman dies in his arms before she has a chance to be unfaithful to her husband. How, we wonder, will the narrator handle this unspeakable situation, particularly given that the woman's young son is asleep down the hall?

Even in novels that do not begin with the explosion of a narrative bomb, Marías usually makes sure that we can hear one ticking. In the opening lines of "All Souls" (1989), he tells us:

> Of the three, two have died since I left Oxford and the superstitious thought occurs to me that they were perhaps just waiting for me to arrive and live out my time there in order to give me the chance to know them and, now, to speak about them. In other words—and this is equally superstitious—I may be under obligation to speak about them.

We are left to wonder who "the three" are, what befell them, and why the narrator feels an obligation to speak. By the end of the story, these questions have been answered, but the answers prove paradoxical, in a way that is typical of Marías's work. His narrators take an active role in gathering the truths behind appearances: like spies, they trail people, on foot, through cities in America, England, and Spain; they eavesdrop, behind doors, on balconies, and in toilets for the handicapped; like detectives, they extract confessions during long conversations, and deliver the news they have collected. Their reports seem comprehensive but reveal a concatenation of unexpected outcomes—infidelities out of which true loves grow, murders that bring about births.



Though not well known in the United States, the Spanish writer Javier Marías is one of the world's most popular novelists.

ANA JUAN

And yet, behind the garrulous presentation of these existential paradoxes, a silence lingers. After such lavish disclosures, why is it that the narrators reveal almost nothing about themselves? Their names, their lives, their feelings, their identities: all remain concealed or disguised. Usually in first-person narrations, confessions lead the reader to an understanding of how the storyteller was changed by events. Think of Nick in "The Great Gatsby," of Augie in his adventures, or Holden and Humbert in theirs—to say any of these names is to conjure an individual whose essence is laid bare by what he relates. In a Marías novel, if we learn the narrator's name at all, to mention it would only conjure a ghost—it is an alias for someone who remains forever in hiding. This is an effect that Marías has deliberately cultivated: he wants the reader actively to wonder who is telling the stories, perhaps even to conclude that there is really a single narrator who unites the novels. Not so much a distinct individual as a distinctive voice, this narrator speaks to us as if from the lip of a stage, in darkness. The lights never come on. His face is never revealed.

Born in Madrid in 1951, Marías may have good reason to favor protagonists who sidestep the act of self-disclosure. Growing up under the dictatorship of Franco, he assimilated an atmosphere in which writers were presented with strong disincentives to openness. Marías was the son of anti-Francoist intellectuals, and his family endured dictatorial mischief more believably conceived in Groucho's kingdom of Freedonia than in the factual realm of Franco. As Marías told one interviewer:

> [My mother] published an anthology titled "España como preocupación" ("Spain as a Preoccupation"), with the subtitle "Literary Anthology." Her name was Dolores Franco—her surname, which is rather common, being the same as the dictator's. Dolores, or Lolita, in Spanish means literally pain, or pains. The censorship argued that "Spain as a Preoccupation," plus Dolores Franco, meaning "pains Franco," wouldn't be accepted.

The treatment of Marías's father, on the other hand, lacked any kind of comic dimension. Julián Marías Aguilera, a disciple of the philosopher Ortega y Gasset, was denounced by a former friend, who accused him, falsely, of writing for *Pravda* and of consorting with Communist leaders. At the time, such a charge, even if baseless, was often a death sentence. Aguilera eluded that fate, but he was jailed and, after being released, was banned both from teaching at a university and from writing for newspapers. With limited options and a growing family, he looked abroad and obtained a succession of temporary teaching posts in Puerto Rico and the United States. Less than a month after the birth of Javier, the third of four children, a job became available at Wellesley, and the family moved to Massachusetts. There they lived with the poet Jorge Guillén, himself a Spanish exile, who had a soft spot for visiting intellectuals—among them Vladimir Nabokov, who had lived next door a few years earlier.

Estate Collections
B. Smaller

"I feel like I'm not living up to my Zip Code."

This peripatetic period during Javier's early childhood left an indelible mark on him—his parents referred to him as "the American baby." Although most of his life has been spent in Spain (despite teaching stints in America and Oxford), this formative, forced exposure to English put him on the road to a career that runs parallel to his novelistic existence, as a highly regarded literary translator. Over the years, Marías has translated a vast range of American and English writing, including poetry by John Ashbery, W. H. Auden, Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, Frank O'Hara, and Wallace Stevens; and fiction by Anthony Burgess, Raymond Carver, Thomas Hardy, J. D. Salinger, Robert Louis Stevenson, and John Updike. He has also done major translations of classics such as Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici" and Laurence Sterne's "Tristram Shandy."

This work has had an impact on Marías as a writer. On the most basic level, Marías has made all his narrators in some sense translators; whether they happen to teach translation theory or work as interpreters, ghostwriters, or opera singers, each is giving voice to other people's stories. These are professions that fit well with the narrators' tendency never to reveal their identities entirely. Marías's translation work is also reflected in his method, as he once acknowledged in an interview:

> If you rewrite high literature in an acceptable way you've done a lot. Your instrument is more resilient than it was. You can say that you're capable of renouncing your own style, adopting someone else's, yet the wording is always yours. The common idea is that the translator is a slave to the original text. But that's not true at all in the sense that there is not one sentence in any language that allows just one translation. You always have to choose.

This habit of choosing is central to the kind of writer Marías has become, and explains much of what is unique about his work: he has made indecision—the space between two alternatives—the center of his stories. And this indecision is conveyed in the equivocations and qualifications of the narrative voice.

Although there is ample precedent for the deliberative "I" in literature, it has tended to be the province of nonfiction. Montaigne, who introduced his essays by alerting the reader that "I am myself the matter of my book," is remembered for his willingness ("*Que sais-je?*") to explore every issue from multiple sides. Like Montaigne, Marías's narrators are unembarrassed to reveal their uncertainties; they choose, but endlessly question their choices, and often contradict themselves entirely. These conspicuous reversals, and a related ambivalence about the benefits of storytelling, are central to Marías's work:

> In my books there is not only the action, the characters, the story and so forth; there is reflection as well, and often the action stops. The narrator then makes a series of considerations and meditations. There is a tradition within the novel form, almost forgotten now, which embodies what I call literary thinking or literary thought. It's a way of thinking which takes place only in literature—the things you never think of or hit upon unless you are writing fiction. Unlike philosophical thinking, which demands an argument without logical flaws and contradictions, literary thinking allows you to contradict yourself.

"Your Face Tomorrow: Volume I, Fever and Spear," is Marías's most extravagant showcase for "literary thinking" so far. It also serves as a compelling introduction to his writing, and is the start of what promises to be a multivolume work. A second volume, "Baile y Sueño—Dance and Dream"—is already available in Spain, and Marías is now writing Volume III. While he has claimed that this will mark the work's end, it is worth keeping in mind that he made the same claim for Volume II when Volume I appeared. Proust announced, in 1912, that he had finished his multivolume novel, but he continued adding to it for another decade, and died before the final revisions had been completed. Even if Marías's current project does not reach these extremes, the portion of it that has already appeared intensifies a growing suspicion that his novels are all, in a sense, puzzle pieces of a larger whole.

"Fever and Spear" begins with sly, guarded reflections reminiscent of the opening of "All Souls," a novel that, like this one, is set largely in Oxford:

> One should never tell anyone anything or give information or pass on stories or make people remember beings who have never existed or trodden the earth or traversed the world, or who, having done so, are now almost safe in uncertain, one-eyed oblivion. Telling is almost always done as a gift, even when the story contains and injects some poison, it is also a bond, a granting of trust, and rare is the trust or confidence that is not sooner or later betrayed.

Immediately, we are led to wonder what betrayal the narrator will reveal. His reluctance to "tell anyone anything" acquires further menace when we learn that he has worked for the British Secret Service as an interpreter, a job that involved more than just translation:

> It would be best just to say translator or interpreter of people: of their behaviour and reactions, of their inclinations and characters and powers of endurance; of their malleability and their submissiveness, of their faint or firm wills, their inconstancies, their limits, their innocence, their lack of scruples and their resistance; their possible degrees of loyalty or baseness and their calculable prices and their poisons and their temptations.

By taking in what "behaviour and reactions" silently betray about people, the narrator is able to report on them to his bosses.

The narrator—who, it gradually appears, is the narrator of "All Souls" reprised—comes from Madrid, and is named Jacques Deza, although, characteristically, he answers to many cognates of his first name: Jaime, Santiago, Diego, and Yago ("all forms of the same name"), Jacobo ("the most pretentious form"), Iago ("the classical form"), and even Jack ("a phonetic approximation"). Deza narrates his account at some unspecified time in the future, and explains how, in early middle age, he came to espionage. It was at a time of personal difficulty, during "my separation from my wife, Luisa, when I came back to England so as not to be near her while she was slowly distancing herself from me." Living alone in London and working for the BBC, Deza accepts an invitation to a party in Oxford hosted by an old friend, Professor Peter Wheeler, "an eminent and now retired Hispanist and Lusitanist," even though he suspects that Wheeler's motives go beyond filling him with wine and cheese: "I had already accepted the invitation with pleasure and made a note of the date and the hour, and then he added with feigned hesitancy (but without concealing the fact that it was feigned): 'Anyway, that fellow Bertram Tupra will be there.' " Deza wonders who Tupra is and why Wheeler wants them to meet.

At Wheeler's party, the beginnings of an answer emerge. Initially, Deza is surprised by Tupra's apparent plainness, thinking that he looks "like a well-traveled diplomat . . . or else a high-ranking civil servant." And yet, as he observes him more carefully, Deza discovers more:

> His eyes were blue or grey depending on the light and he had long eyelashes, dense enough to be the envy of any woman and to be considered highly suspect by any man. His pale eyes had a mocking quality, even if this was not his intention—and his eyes were, therefore, expressive even when no expression was required—they were also rather warm or should I say appreciative, eyes that are never indifferent to what is there before them and which make anyone upon whom they fall feel worthy of curiosity, eyes whose very liveliness gave the immediate impression that they were going to get to the bottom of whatever being or object or landscape or scene they alighted upon.

A penetrating gaze, we find, is something that Wheeler has noticed in Deza, too. Wheeler—a former spy now involved in recruitment—believes that this makes Deza a good candidate for the Secret Service, in which, it turns out, Tupra is a senior figure.

After the other guests have left the party, Wheeler starts to question Deza about them. "What did you think of Beryl?" he asks about Tupra's companion. Deza replies, "Rather too many teeth and too big a jaw, but she's still rather pretty. Her smell is the most attractive thing about her, her best feature: an unusual, pleasant, very sexual smell." Wheeler stares at Deza with "a mixture of reproof and mockery":

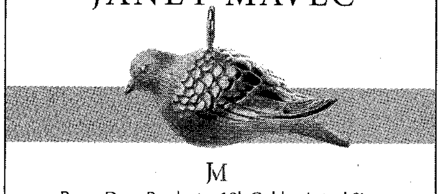
> "That isn't what I meant at all. I would never have dared even to ask myself if you had or hadn't found Beryl's animal humours stimulating, you'll have to forgive my lack of curiosity about your proclivities in that area. I meant regarding Tupra, what impression did you have about her in relation to him, in her relation to him now. That's what I want to know, not if you were aroused by her . . ." he paused for a moment, "by her secretions."

When Deza suggests that Tupra and Beryl might be a couple who have grown bored with each other, Wheeler takes the opportunity to probe: "Was that what happened with you and Luisa?" Deza deftly avoids self-revelation: "I or we didn't let it get that far. It was something else, something simpler perhaps and certainly faster. Less cloying. Cleaner perhaps."

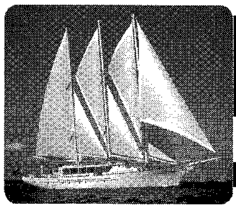
The dialogue between Deza and

ASIATICA
TIMELESS CLOTHES for WORLDLY WOMEN
fashion of vintage & contemporary japanese textiles
IN NYC NOV. 9–19
complete trunk show schedule: www.asiaticakc.com or 800.731.0831

THE BOLD NEW MAGAZINE at the intersection of law and life
In the November|December Issue:
Those dirty rotten hedge funds
Citizen militias: locked and loaded
Pirating Peru's *Viagra natural*
legal**affairs**
On Newsstands Now
www.legalaffairs.org • 800-406-5615
• SPECIAL OFFER •
Save 44% at www.legalaffairs.org/nyer

JANET MAVEC

JM
Peace Dove Pendant • 18k Gold • Actual Size
212.517.7665 • www.janetmavec.com

The Companion to the PBS Series
IN SEARCH OF MYTHS AND HEROES
Exploring Four Epic Legends of the World
By MICHAEL WOOD
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
www.ucpress.edu


The most popular sailing cruises in the Virgin Islands, Chesapeake, and New England.
THE Arabella
www.cruisearabella.com
800-395-1343
Also available for corporate & private charter

100% COTTON
Corduroy Sport Coat
Suede Elbow Patches
All Sizes. Tan. $185.00
Hunter and Coggins
1-800-343-9396
hunterandcoggins.com

Wheeler extends deep into the night. Indeed, Marías pulls off a considerable narrative coup: the core of the novel is essentially a job interview, a game of conversational cat and mouse between the old spy and the younger recruit. More than in any previous novel, Marías places the evasiveness of his main characters within a conspicuous historical and political context. Wheeler reveals more about his wartime activities, and mentions a British propaganda campaign that tried to keep British subjects from inadvertently disclosing information that could reach the ears of Nazi spies. However sensible, the campaign had unwanted effects:

> People were suspicious of their neighbour, their relative, their teacher, their colleague, the shopkeeper, the doctor, their wife, their husband, and many took advantage of such easy, widespread suspicions, perfectly understandable given the climate at the time, to get rid of a hated spouse.

Such stories of distrust and opportunism lead Deza to recall his father's experiences during the Spanish Civil War, specifically his denunciation by a former friend as "a collaborator on the Moscow newspaper, *Pravda*." This biographical detail is, of course, drawn from the life of Marías's father, and the direct engagement with Marías's family history sends a shiver of recognition through a seasoned Marías reader. The narrator, hitherto a voice in the dark, takes a step closer to the light. One cannot help noticing how many of Marías's other novels dare us—subtly here, grandly there—to mistake the narrator for the author himself; in "All Souls," the two even share the same birthday.

In this manner, Marías, like W. G. Sebald, collects deposits of belief in his books; he encourages the reader to risk taking fiction as fact. But, in fiction, belief is where the fun begins, whereas in life, Marías seems to be saying, what we believe—and what is believed about us—is where the trouble begins. At one point, Deza wonders:

> How can someone not see, in the long term, that the person who will and does end up ruining us will indeed ruin us? How can you not sense or guess at their plotting, their machinations, their circular dance, not smell their hostility or breathe their despair, not notice their slow skulking, their leisurely, languishing waiting, and the inevitable impatience that they would have had to contain for who knows how many years? How can I not know today your face tomorrow, the face that is there already or is being forged beneath the face you show me or beneath the mask you are wearing.

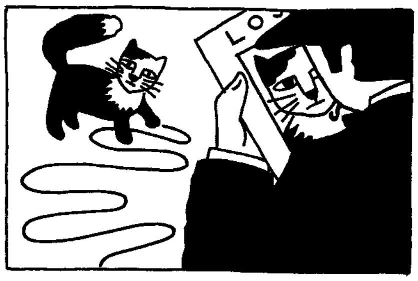
Deza suggests that his remedy for such a betrayal might be to seek vengeance. He is perplexed to learn that his father does not share this impulse. But, as his father tells him, they are different kinds of men: "You do have a tendency to hang on to things, Jacobo, and it's sometimes hard for you to let go, you're not always good at leaving things behind."

For a reader coming to the sudden, provisional end of "Fever and Spear," there is an unsettling but exhilarating sense that, while a great betrayal surely lurks down the road, there is little suggestion of where the next volumes will ultimately lead. We know that Deza has left his wife (but not why); that he has left his life in espionage (but not how); that a woman is following him through the rainy London streets (but not who). Perhaps these questions will be answered; perhaps they will not. The truest answers may not arrive in any of the volumes of "Your Face Tomorrow"; rather, perhaps, they should be sought in the books that precede them and in those which will follow. After all, the first words of Deza's narrative turn out to be an echo of Wheeler's parting words to him, when their night of talk has run its course: "One shouldn't really ever tell anyone anything." The key word is "should"—the conditional mood. This is the mood in which all Marías's books take place; the choice between what might have been and what will always be is continuously explored. Like Nabokov in his Antiterra, like Faulkner in his imaginary South, Marías, from book to book but in one voice, has been mapping a country of his own, a Yoknapatawpha of the mind, full of tension between the desire to know and the fear of what knowledge costs. It is an old fear, and one that, in this age of surveillance, has gained ground. As another of Marías's narrators insists, "Listening is the most dangerous thing of all. . . . Listening means knowing, finding out, knowing everything there is to know, ears don't have lids that can close against the words uttered, they can't hide from what they sense they're about to hear, it's always too late." ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Sea, *by John Banville (Knopf; $23).* Banville's novel, which won this year's Man Booker Prize, is narrated by an art historian, whose grief at the death of his wife has stalled his work on a "Big Book on Bonnard." In retreat at an Irish seaside town where he vacationed as a child, he sifts through memories of his entanglement with an upper-class family who stayed nearby. The plot is minimal; instead, the novel's drama takes place in Banville's remarkable imagery—a thunderstorm is "the sky stamping up and down in a fury, breaking its bones," and distant breakers are "like a hem being turned endlessly by a sleepy seamstress." Banville's technique generates a kind of supercharged sparseness, forcefully conveying the narrator's anguish, as he comes to an understanding that "we are defined and have our being through others" and must realign ourselves when those closest to us disappear.

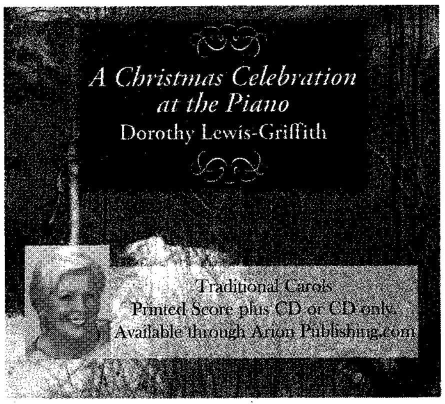
Beasts of No Nation, *by Uzodinma Iweala (HarperCollins; $16.95).* This startling début by a young American-Nigerian writer follows the fortunes of Agu, a child soldier fighting in the civil war of an unnamed African country. Iweala's acute imagining of Agu's perspective allows him to depict the war as a mesh of bestial pleasures and pain. As seen through Agu's eyes, machetes sound like music, and bodies come apart on roads so cracked that you can see "the red mud bleeding from underneath." Agu has a child's primitive drive that enables him to survive his descent into hell, and, despite the brutality he witnesses and participates in, to keep hold of something resembling optimism. The contrast between his belief in the future and the horrific descriptions of the world around him makes Agu a haunting narrator.



The Third Reich in Power, *by Richard J. Evans (Penguin; $37.95).* In the second part of a three-volume history of the Third Reich, Evans examines Hitler's regime in the six years running up to the Second World War, exploring everything from art to the economy and shifting diplomatic alliances. He offers exhaustive statistical analysis coupled with the compelling personal narratives of dignitaries, dissidents, and such ordinary Germans as a Hamburg schoolteacher. A portrait emerges of a state that penetrated and transformed every aspect of life, and yet remained incoherent and often inept. Evans shows that Nazism was all the more effective for its irrationality and arbitrariness: there was no logic in which to take refuge. Language was perverted ("brutal" and "ruthless" were terms of praise), laws were enacted to sanction mayhem retroactively, and faith in science yielded pseudo-archaic notions of "blood and soil."

Dream Boogie, *by Peter Guralnick (Little, Brown; $27.95).* Until Sam Cooke was shot dead in a Los Angeles motel, in 1964, at the age of thirty-three, his life had been an ascending series of crossover moves: he conquered the postwar gospel-music scene, scored bigger hits by moving into secular rhythm and blues, and then, after signing with R.C.A., in 1960, proceeded to go pop, and released a string of smooth, catchy singles that placed him on the cusp of mainstream superstar status. Guralnick, as in his biography of Elvis Presley, displays a feel for the culture that gave rise to the musician, and his account is a revelatory portrait of the rough-and-tumble yet familial world of black show business before and during the civil-rights era. In darker corners lurk the antecedents of today's gangster-rap subculture—racketeers who funded black record labels and tour packages, and performers like Johnny (Guitar) Watson, who made more as a pimp than he did singing.

Better Way To Sleep
Soft 100% Cotton Knit TeePJ's™
Tee-PJ's are not ordinary nightshirts. The special knit moves as you move for the ultimate in sleeping and lounging comfort and **no side seams!** Quality made in the U.S.A.
Most comfortable sleeper you've ever worn or your money back!
Great for Ladies, too.
White or Soft Blue. SIZES to fit **90-300 lbs.**
Specify man/lady and **height/weight.**
No extra charge for XXL & XXXL on 1st order!
$21.95ea. 2 for $39.90 (Save $4)
Long sleeve style (not shown)
$25.95ea. 2 for $46.90 (Save $5)
S&H – Add $4.95 for 1 or $6.95 for 2
WITTMANN TEXTILES, Dept. 114
P.O. Box 1066, Hobe Sound, FL 33475-1066
(Ship to FL add tax) **1-772-546-4656**
visit us at www.sleepshirt.com


A Christmas Celebration at the Piano
Dorothy Lewis-Griffith
Traditional Carols
Printed Score plus CD or CD only
Available through Arion Publishing.com

JOHN ✝ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
3 DAY RUSH AVAILABLE!
Children's Names & Birthstones
14K $450 (UP TO 5 NAMES)
RINGBOX.COM 1-888-646-6466

THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO
summer session 2006
Programs for High School Students
Take undergraduate courses and more.
http://summer.uchicago.edu

cherry bedsteads built to last
extensive selection
of craftsman quality
solid wood furniture
ultra performance
foam mattresses
scottjordan.com
SCOTT JORDAN FURNITURE
137 Varick Street corner of Spring NYC 212.620.4682

WATERSTONESINK.COM
WATER STONE
Artisan Sinks
Stoneware
Porcelain
207 963 5819

THE THEATRE

MUSIC MEN

A hit, a miss, and moola.

BY JOHN LAHR

After the sensational first production of "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street," in 1979, Stephen Sondheim underwent media canonization as the patron saint of the American musical. "Is Stephen Sondheim God?" one magazine headline asked. Since then, as Sondheim's musical experiments have repeatedly disappointed as narratives, "Sweeney Todd"—the brooding, gleeful story of a vengeful barber who dispatches his clientele with a razor and then has them served up in meat pies—has loomed ever larger as the composer's enduring masterpiece. From the poisoned wells of Victorian oppression, Sondheim drew his purest water; and it is in "Sweeney"'s toxic nihilism that his own heartbroken detachment found its strongest voice. But reverence, like habit, can be a great deadener, and, on the face of it, the imported British revival of "Sweeney" (at the Eugene O'Neill), which shrinks the cast of thirty to ten, with actors doubling as musicians, looks like yet another exercise in high-art zealotry. In fact, under the bold direction and design of John Doyle, this minimalist re-imagining is almost unbearably exciting. Its thrilling transparency liberates the show from the operatic exquisiteness that too often infects Sondheim productions, filling it instead with the vulgar, raffish immediacy of showmanship. The result, it seems to me, is luminous and a sort of landmark.

There are no painted vistas of derelict London, no barber's chair, no chute to send the corpses plummeting into Mrs. Lovett's basement, no jolly proles gobbling pies made from human flesh, no glowing oven into which Mrs. Lovett is finally herself dispatched. Eschewing many of the musical's traditional visual delights, Doyle's production relies on one delight that is rarely called upon by the Broadway musical these days: the imagination. With eight chairs, a coffin, and a ladder, Doyle conjures up a universe of woe and wonder; the actors are not just characters and musicians—they are also the scenery. The blood here is of the Brechtian, not the Grand Guignol, variety, and the real spectacle is the dynamism between song and story, which, for once, turns a spotlight on the brilliance of the show's librettist, Hugh Wheeler.

"As is often the case in Sondheim's musicals, we don't care about characters," Frank Rich wrote in a *Times* review of "Sunday in the Park with George" (1984). This is the problem. Most of Sondheim's scores—"Pacific Overtures," "Assassins," "Sunday in the Park"—favor abstraction over narrative, which is why Wheeler's contribution is so important. Incorporating the class consciousness of the British playwright Christopher Bond's adaptation into his own edgy story, Wheeler grounds Sondheim's genius both in a moral universe and in the elegant architecture of event, which shrewdly defines character and builds tension. Sweeney, who was transported to Australia for fifteen years on a trumped-up charge by a judge who lusted after his wife, returns to London in disguise to find his wife apparently dead and his beloved daughter the ward of the very judge who sent him away. Revenge is his oxygen. Of the libretto's many felicities of reversal and surprise, the delay of Sweeney's rough justice on the judge is a particularly piquant construction. Wheeler's cunning economy distills each dramatic moment to its essence.

The stage at the Eugene O'Neill is dominated by a black wood coffin, a reminder that death is at the heart of every lyric moment. Tipped up, the coffin becomes the bench over which the judge presides; tipped down, it is the alcove where Sweeney's daughter and her lover sing of escape. The coffin is also the place from which Sweeney (Michael Cerveris) emerges in all his dark majesty. His head shaved, his body cloaked in black leather, Cerveris is a terrifying Sweeney, a model of sulfurous restraint. A sense of rage and regret percolates through every syllable he speaks, never more eloquently than in his first song upon returning to England: "There's a hole in the world / Like a great black pit / And the vermin of the world inhabit it / And its morals aren't worth / What a pig could spit / And it goes by the name of London."

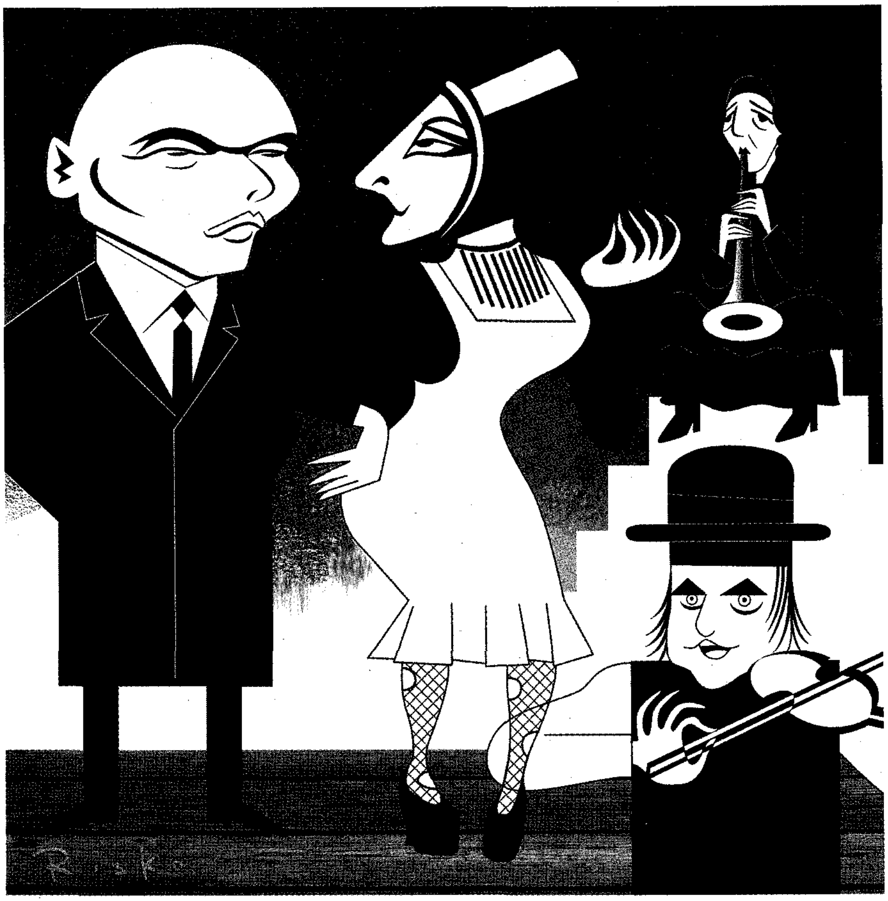
Patti LuPone is Sweeney's pragmatic and pathological helpmate, Mrs. Lovett. A gargoyle of toughness, with an angular haircut, red lips and nails, a short skirt, and fishnet knee socks, LuPone looks positively Weimar. If Doyle's version deprives Mrs. Lovett of some of her shtick, at least it equips her with a tuba, which gives the term "big entrance" a meaning all its own. LuPone is never better than when Mrs. Lovett hits on the idea of disposing of one of Sweeney's victims by getting others to swallow the evidence. "Think of it as thrift / As a gift / If you get my drift," she sings. The new business partners' giddiness at the brainstorm is matched by Sondheim's pyrotechnical verbal display, as Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett imagine serving up a whole spectrum of English society in their new line of mean cuisine. "What is that?" Sweeney sings. Mrs. Lovett replies, "It's fop / Finest in the shop. / Or we have some shepherd's pie peppered / With actual shepherd on top."

In this production, which sheds the eggy trappings of naturalism, even the star-crossed young lovers, Anthony (Benjamin Magnuson) and Johanna (Lauren Molina), who usually come across as ninnies, take on a refreshing, compelling sweetness. Every emotional gesture they make finds a parallel in the music they play. For instance, when Sweeney learns that the judge has consigned Johanna to a madhouse for "safekeeping," Johanna, on the other side of the stage, draws her bow across her cello in a single tremulous punishing note that suggests the howling inmates.

With its beautiful choral elements stripped back and the Victorian extravaganza all but eliminated, the musical is both darker and more vital. As life and theatre have taught us, there is no escape from the power of the perverse. "There he is, it's Sweeney! / Sweeney! Sweeney!" the company sings at the finale, pointing out into the audience. At the curtain call, on the night I saw the show, from the orchestra to the farthest reaches of the mezzanine, the audience was on its feet.

In Doyle's "Sweeney Todd," novelty is supported by substance; in Michael John LaChiusa's "See What I Wanna See" (at the Public), the substance is novelty itself. "See What I Wanna See," a series of four musical scenes adapted from stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, has attracted a first-rate cast and is expertly mounted by the director Ted Sperling. But, as is typical of LaChiusa's work, it is situated somewhere between talent and pretension—or, in this case, between medieval Japan and contemporary Central Park. At the opening, Kesa (the fine-voiced Idina Menzel), a Japanese woman in a silk kimono, sings of seeing her lover, Morito (the superb Marc Kudisch), for the last time, in words that don't quite have that medieval ring: "He knifes into my body / Forcibly and proud / (My lover is incredibly endowed)." In the first scene set in Japan, Kesa kills Morito; in the second, Morito strangles Kesa.

It seems that LaChiusa has come under the influence of Cubism. "I loved that you could turn the box that way and see one side of the story, and then turn it just slightly . . . and still see the same story but with a different angle," he says, in the program. Unfortunately, he seems to have missed the point of Cubist fragmentation, whose purpose is to shatter form in order to arrive at a clearer idea of an object's essence. LaChiusa just dramatizes opposites. This is true in the New York segments of the musical as well. In "R Shomon," a fifties noir pastiche about lust, rape, and murder, the characters, instead of giving different perspectives on the same event in order to construct a coherent portrait of the whole, merely offer their mutually exclusive points of view. In "Gloryday," a priest (Henry Stram) who has lost his faith plays a practical joke on believers by announcing that Jesus will rise on a given day. The priest's prank turns out to be a joke on himself. When the day comes, while the believers see nothing, he, to his amazement, has a vision. "A miracle. I saw," he tells his aunt. "You believe me, don't you?" She replies, "If you say so, baby. Why not?" Truth, you see, is relative. If it makes LaChiusa happy to think that this show is an advance in musical storytelling and that he is saying something meaningful, then I say why not. To every man his miracle.



John Doyle's minimalist staging of "Sweeney Todd" is a sort of landmark.

ROBERT RISKO

The musical currently doesn't know how to express itself because it doesn't know what it wants to express—except profit. In pursuit of the golden egg, producers are turning more often to jukebox musicals, in which a jerry-built plot is constructed around a popular songwriter's catalogue to create, in other words, a concert with conflict. It's not an easy thing to do well, and recent shows focussing on the work of John Lennon, Elvis Presley, the Beach Boys, and Burt Bacharach and Hal David have all fizzled. However, the latest entry in the jukebox sweepstakes, "Jersey Boys," which tells the story of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons (at the August Wilson, under the rollicking direction of Des McAnuff), looks to be a winner.

The splendid actors here—Christian Hoff, J. Robert Spencer, Daniel Reichard, and, especially, John Lloyd Young, as Valli—take turns narrating the group's rise from lower-class Jersey doo-woppers to Rock and Roll Hall of Famers, and they're as tight musically as they are persuasive dramatically. Their falsetto harmonies wash over the audience for two and half hours, as they work through an exhausting slew of hit songs. This is direct, pedal-to-the-metal stuff, without nuance, irony, or wit—the sound, as the show insists, of the working people. Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice have written a clever book, which should become the template for this kind of musical excavation; it sets up the songs with well-judged humor and the elegant strokes of observation that the Four Seasons' repertoire lacks. At one point, during Valli's first date with Mary (Jennifer Naimo), the *baleboste* who becomes his first wife, she asks why he spells his invented Italian surname with a "y" and not an "i." " 'Y' is such a bullshit letter," she says. "It doesn't know what it is. Is it a vowel? Is it a consonant?" "Jersey Boys" knows exactly what it is: a money tree. The audience is tickled to death, but, given enough of these ersatz events, Broadway musical theatre may be, too. ♦

Almost every Houston rapper owes something to Bun B, the scene's thirty-two-year-old elder. Photograph by Dan Winters.

POP MUSIC

A PLACE IN THE SUN

Houston hip-hop takes over.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

In the fall of 1991, an unusual song found its way onto the radio. It was called "Mind Playing Tricks on Me," and was performed by a Houston hip-hop trio called Geto Boys. A slow, mournful plaint, "Mind" relied on long, harmonically complex guitar samples—a departure from the short horn bursts and rapid drums then dominating hip-hop. If the song had an antecedent, it was the blues, not music you might have heard in a disco. Geto Boys—Scarface, Bushwick Bill, and Willie D—had deep, unmistakably Southern voices, and their lyrics didn't celebrate or protest anything. "Mind" is an unsettling song, its opening couplets freighted with anxiety: "At night I can't sleep, I toss and turn. / Candlesticks in the dark, visions of bodies being burned. / Four walls just staring at a nigger. / I'm paranoid, sleeping with my finger on the trigger." For several months, "Mind" was on the radio all the time. Then Geto Boys—and Southern hip-hop—seemed to disappear. In the fourteen years since "Mind" was released, the band has showed up again on the Billboard pop charts only twice, most recently in 1996.

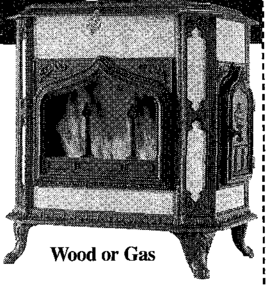
Now Houston hip-hop is back, enjoying a musical hegemony that happens only occasionally in pop. Not since Nirvana made Seattle the capital of grunge, in 1991, have a city, a sound, and a significant chart presence been so closely linked. One of the year's biggest hip-hop songs, "Still Tippin'"—which was released on Swishahouse, an independent label, in 2003, and rereleased by Warner Bros. in January—introduced Americans to three influential Houston m.c.s: the needling, self-deprecating Mike Jones; the swaggering, bass-voiced giant Slim Thug; and the cheerfully louche white rapper Paul Wall. Wall's major-label début record, "The Peoples Champ," entered the charts at No. 1 in September, and Jones's first major-label album, "Who Is Mike Jones?," which was released in April, has gone platinum. Two other local m.c.s, Aztek and Short Dog, who are virtually unknown outside the city, have been signed by established industry figures—Jay-Z and Russell Simmons, respectively—and the Geto Boys' new album, "The Foundation," has been well received.

"Still Tippin' " is an elegant primer on Houston hip-hop. The music is unhurried and woozy, as if it had been left too long in the sun. A violin phrase wells up again and again, like a bubble in a blender, while the rappers hew to the sticky beat, drawling about cars, women, and diamond grills (the precious-metal molds inlaid with diamonds that rappers wear on their front teeth). The easy finesse of Houston's m.c.s can make East Coast hip-hop sound stressed out, uptight, or just plain square. The Houston sound is, above all, slow, a perpetually decelerating music that is equally good at conveying menace, calm, and grief. (The sound was taken to a logical extreme in the early nineties, when a Houston native named DJ Screw found a way to play hip-hop records at nearly half speed, creating a genre that was eventually named after him—screw. Skillfully executed, screw music turns hip-hop and R. & B. back into blues and gospel.) The city's heat seems to encourage both languor and soul-spilling; Houston m.c.s rap charmingly about their possessions but are comfortable singing about death, racist cops, and life in prison.

They are also an unusually collegial group; every m.c. and producer I met in Houston gave me phone numbers for other musicians. The intense and sometimes lethal professional rivalries that characterize the New York hip-hop scene seemed hardly to exist; in Houston, everyone is on everyone else's record, and one rapper's commercial success is invariably two or three others' as well.

Almost every Houston rapper owes something—musical inspiration, perfor-

Radiant Soapstone Warmth



Soapstone is nature's perfect stove material – beautiful, durable, and efficient. It heats steadily and comfortably - day after day, night after night. No power required. Free catalog.

Wood or Gas

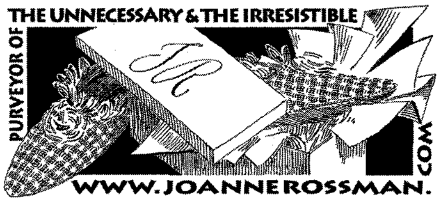
Woodstock Soapstone Company, Inc.
66 Airpark Rd, Dept. 2396, W. Lebanon NH 03784

www.woodstove.com
1-888-664-8188

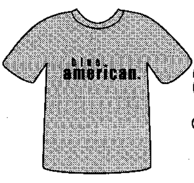
COSMOPOLITAN ELEGANCE AND REFINED LIFESTYLE AT A ONE-OF-A-KIND RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS IN MONTREAL.

CONDOS FROM $209,000 TO OVER A MILLION
1.888.333.7770 333SHERBROOKE.COM

3|3|3
SHERBROOKE



THE UNNECESSARY & THE IRRESISTIBLE
PURVEYOR OF
WWW.JOANNEROSSMAN.COM



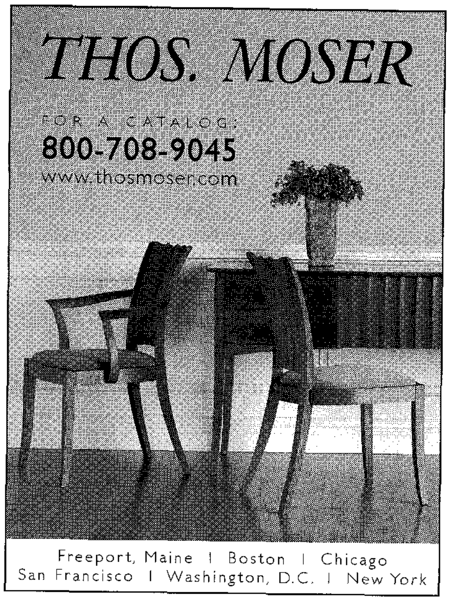
blue american™
clothing for the other 57,288,974 people
www.blueamerican.net

Flaunt Your Identity

Your unique fingerprint
Represented in silver or bronze
Perfect Christmas gift
or for that special anniversary

www.identityexpression.com
(425) 430-0565

RSVP
Reader Service Value Program
For FREE Information
visit www.tnyrsvp.com

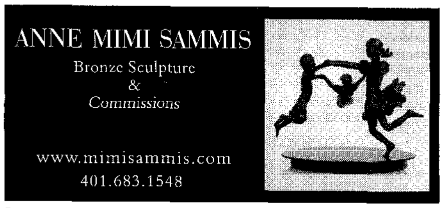

THOS. MOSER
FOR A CATALOG:
800-708-9045
www.thosmoser.com
Freeport, Maine | Boston | Chicago
San Francisco | Washington, D.C. | New York

Lilly for Company:
Austin Casual Menus
for Palm & Plate
A cookbook that allows the host to relax ~Texas Monthly
www.lillybook.com
512-689-3246

18k gold on handwoven sterling
celticjewelry.com
888.733.5238
Designs by
Helen Chantler
Free Catalog

Missing A Piece of Your Pattern?®
American Sterling Silver
Beverly Bremer
SILVER SHOP
Over 1,200 Patterns In Stock • Flatware
Hollowware • New/Used • Buy/Sell
Call for an inventory of your pattern
404-261-4009
3164 Peachtree Road, NE. Dept. NY, Atlanta GA 30305 • M - Sat 10-5

George Howell
Terroir
Coffee Company
Only the Freshest and Finest Coffees.
Single origin coffees roasted to perfection and shipped fresh to you. Named "Best Overall" by the Wall Street Journal. Fair Trade & Organic.
WWW.TERROIRCOFFEE.COM | (866) 444-5282


ANNE MIMI SAMMIS
Bronze Sculpture
&
Commissions
www.mimisammis.com
401.683.1548

mance opportunities, moral support—to Bun B, the hip-hop community's thirty-two-year-old elder. For fourteen years, Bun B has performed and recorded as one half of the duo UGK (Underground Kingz). On October 18th, he released his first solo album, "Trill." In seven days, it sold almost a hundred and twenty thousand copies, entering the Billboard charts at No. 6. "Trill" is a focussed and occasionally brilliant example of Houston rap, preoccupied with the status-enhancing possibilities of guns, cars, and women, but more convincing than the work of Bun's juniors, mostly because of his forceful delivery. Bun has a steady tenor voice and carves his straightforward rhymes with precision. He stretches out the middle of the word "ain't," then bites the "t" off cleanly, as in: "Cause we doin' it real big, in case you thinkin' we ain't." His presentation is unfussy, direct, and loud.

As UGK, Bun and his partner, Pimp C, found an audience with "Pocket Full of Stones," a vivid song about drug dealing that was featured on the soundtrack of the 1993 film "Menace II Society." Six years later, UGK performed several tough-minded, pro-South verses on Jay-Z's top-forty single "Big Pimpin' "—including Bun's memorable admonishment "Go read a book, you illiterate son of a bitch, and step up yo' vocab." In 2002, after Pimp C was charged with a parole violation stemming from an aggravated-assault conviction and imprisoned, Bun B entered a period of intense productivity, contributing guest verses to dozens of tracks, by almost every major artist in hip-hop, and hosting numerous local mix tapes.

"Trill" starts in fifth gear, with "Bun," a track so rapid that it sounds almost Northeastern. The verses of "Bun," standard bragging and boasting fare, are punctuated on every other beat by a small chorus chanting his name. Bun himself is atypically wound up, riding the front of the beat as though he were running in place and had to stop every few words to catch his breath: "You know it's certified" (pause) "ain't with them games, 'cause" (pause) "we whoopin' ass, then" (pause) "we takin' names." After "Bun," the album's pace subsides to a more geographically appropriate sway.

"The Story" is a thoroughly successful track, a potential template for rappers stuck for ideas: talk about what you've done, not what you intend to do. Hip-hop has come to depend on threats and imagined grandeur, but "The Story" is satisfyingly empirical, a rare glimpse into an artist's uneasy relationships with his label and his fans. Bun B talks candidly about his partner's legal problems, the importance of appearing on "Big Pimpin'," and the pressure he feels from the duo's record label to release a sequel to the song. Bun worries that, to his core Southern audience, collaborating with a top-ten rapper like Jay-Z could seem awfully pop, as opposed to street: "It sounded O.K., but me, I had to ask, / 'If we don't do "Big Pimpin' 2," will you still put us on blast?' / A song like that might take a nigga to the top, but my true fan base might think a nigga flopped. / They got mad, and put niggas on hold / for damn near a year until the buzz got cold."

If you are a Houston m.c. of any note, you probably drive a "slab," the local word for an enormous American car from the nineteen-seventies or eighties that has been overhauled and tricked out in high-gloss "candy paint." Watch the video for any new Houston song and you'll see at least one slab whose trunk, possibly containing a neon sign, may open hydraulically, and dramatically. As Bun B puts it in the album's best track and first single, "Draped Up": "Push a button and my car is wavin' bye to you, punk."

The song, which was produced by Salih Williams, a sly Austin musician who was also responsible for "Still Tippin'," is marvellously sinuous and dark, a mix of low humming sounds and raspy digital melodies; it calls to mind a hovercraft covered with blinking Christmas lights. (The song's video features no hovercrafts, sadly, but it is only a matter of time before a rapper steps up the vehicular competition.) The chorus is a sample taken from "Pimp Tha Pen," a 1995 collaboration between DJ Screw and the rapper Lil' Keke: "Draped up and dripped out, know what I'm talking about?" ("Draped up and dripped out" describes both cars and people—a reference to rappers' fancy clothes and gold and platinum chains and their vehicles' custom details.) One of Bun's lines captures the feeling of much Houston hip-hop these days, glee mixed with vindication: "Back in the days, all they ever did was doubt us. / Now the South is in the house, and they can't do nothing about us." ◆

THE CURRENT CINEMA

PARENT TRAPS

"Pride and Prejudice" and "Bee Season."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The new film of "Pride and Prejudice," directed by Joe Wright, plays fast and loose with the novel. This is a good thing, the fast being as welcome as the loose. You can hear the creaks and scrapes as the screenwriter, Deborah Moggach, moves around the furniture of the plot and tosses out—not without regret, presumably—many of the charming inessentials. Still, the lovers and the loathers stay intact. Elizabeth Bennet (Keira Knightley) despises, tolerates, and eventually melts before Mr. Darcy (Matthew Macfadyen), whose country pad is the size of a small planet—not that Lizzie cares a fig for such ephemera. Meanwhile, her sister Jane (Rosamund Pike) makes timid eyes at a carroty chump named Bingley (Simon Woods), who has taken a house nearby. There are three more Bennet sisters, whose idiocy thickens in inverse proportion to their age; a mewing mother (Brenda Blethyn), her cheeks prawn-pink with the exertion of marrying off her brood; and a father (Donald Sutherland), who listens to the farmlike cacklings of the household and, quite properly, shuts his study door. I know that we are meant to treat Mr. Bennet's disengagement from the fray as moral cowardice, but he remains my favorite character in fiction, and anybody who has raised children will applaud his penchant for bookish retreat as a mark of tactical sanity.

Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen in the new film of Jane Austen's novel.

BARRY BLITT

What would Mr. Bennet make of the film? He would be left wondering, I suspect, why God gave him only two eyebrows to raise. Let us not even ponder the likely reactions of Lady Catherine de Bourgh (Judi Dench), Darcy's glacier of an aunt, or those of Mr. Collins (Tom Hollander), the reverend munchkin who resides on Lady Catherine's estate and slithers beneath her gaze. What they would find incomprehensible in the movie is not the storytelling, which charts with commendable briskness the motions of various hearts, but the prevailing mood. Who is this figure, complete with steed and flying cape, who canters through the dusky woods as if eager to get home before the moon turns him into a wolf? Why, it is our friend Mr. Darcy, who has just popped round to deliver a letter. What is the purpose of this tangerine glow that fills the screen? Has the movie taken an unheralded commercial break, in which tanning lotion is being hawked to the audience? No, this is the view from inside Lizzie's closed eyelids on a sunny day. And whence this knocking at the door after dark, which brings the night-shirted Bennets downstairs with quivering candles? It is Lady Catherine, come to bawl and bark at Lizzie in a surprising reënactment of the drill-sergeant routine from "Full Metal Jacket."

What has happened is perfectly clear: Jane Austen has been Brontëfied. In the book, Lady Catherine appears in daylight, "too early in the morning for visitors." The film has rightly kept the hint of social insolence but switched the hour, so that the dramatic may be shaded and inked into melodrama. The question is not whether the director was justified in that transmutation but whether he had the choice; whether any of us, as moviemakers, viewers, or readers, retain the ability—not so much the scholarly equipment as the imaginative clairvoyance—to see Austen clearly. Maybe we are doomed to view her through the smoked glass of the intervening centuries, during which the spirit of romance, and the role of the body within it, have evolved out of all recognition. Why, when Lizzie accompanies her aunt and uncle to the Peak District of England, should the film take care to set her silent upon a peak, her dress and tresses stirring in the wind, if not to drop the clanging hint that Mr. Darcy is less an icy gentleman of means than a britches-busting Heathcliff in the making?

The hint becomes a yodel toward the end, as Matthew Macfadyen strides grimly through a wet meadow, at some ungodly hour, with Keira Knightley squarely in his sights. He has donned a long coat, which sways fetchingly in the mist; obviously it was copied from a Human League video of the nineteen-eighties, but I'm damned if I can remember which one. For her part, Knightley has been crisp and quick throughout—more girl than woman than seems fit, perhaps, and a boyish girl to boot, but ready and able to hold her own in any rally of wits. Now, like the queen in "Aliens," she extends her fa-

Advertisement

holiday gift gallery

CALIFORNIA WINE CLUB
A gift of exquisite taste! Two bottles of award-winning wine from California's best boutique wineries with the club's accompanying magazine, "Uncorked," is $32.95, plus shipping. Visit **cawineclub.com** or call **800.777.4443.**

Makes A Fun & Unique Gift!

LEONARDS NEW ENGLAND
Our classic Pencil Post Bed offers exceptional craftsmanship. A treasured heirloom makes the perfect gift. $2,400/Queen, $3,000/King plus shipping ($200 to $300 countrywide). Visit **leonardsdirect.com** or call **888-336-8585.**

MAINE HOLIDAY WREATH
Beautifully hand-crafted of fresh-cut balsam fir, pine cones, red apples, and a red velveteen bow. Approximately 24" in diameter. $24.95 plus $8.95 shipping and handling. Quantity prices available. Visit **maineholidaywreaths.com** or call **800.776.8778.**

THE PAINTED CRITTER
The dachshund bench is one of many adorable selections in the "Fine Seats of Fancy" collection available exclusively at the Painted Critter, Lambertville, NJ. Visit **paintedcritter.com** or call **866.724.6819.**

GRACEWOOD GROVES
Free Shipping! A sweet holiday collection of Florida oranges and grapefruit, plus marmalade and popcrickle popcorn. Item #10GGB is only $25.95 with free standard shipping to the contiguous U.S. Visit **GracewoodGroves.com/NY06** or call **800.678.4133, code NY06.**

THE NEW YORKER DESK DIARY
Order your 2006 *New Yorker* Desk Diary online and personalization is free. Now available in four colors: Classic Blue, Ruby Red, Chocolate Brown, and new Mandarin Orange. Visit **cartoonbank.com** or call **877.408.4269.**

mous underbite and gets down to business. Widening her eyes to maximum chocolaty hue, she stares into his, which are of that sea-cold, grayish blue favored by Gestapo officers in war movies. Hero and heroine bare their feelings to each other; every misunderstanding dissolves in the dawn. In a last, despairing gesture to Georgian England, they do not kiss. Oddly, however, they do rub noses, like well-bred Eskimos, while the rising sun gleams between the tips. Elsewhere in the meadow, the world's leading Richard Clayderman impersonator is pounding away at the keys. All in all, a heavenly moment, and only hard-asses like Lady Catherine and me will fail to be affected. Any resemblance to scenes and characters created by Miss Austen is, of course, entirely coincidental.

If the Bennet home is a barnyard, then life chez Naumann, where "Bee Season" takes place, is more like a tale from the crypt. Saul Naumann (Richard Gere) is a professor at Berkeley, specializing in God. He is married to Miriam (Juliette Binoche), who works in a science lab, although, as with most movie scientists, the sum of her labors is a couple of distracted glances down a microscope. The Naumanns have two children, Aaron (Max Minghella) and Eliza (Flora Cross)—ordinary, prize-winning, cello-playing California kids who smile three times a year. To start with, Aaron is the golden boy, but slowly the shine transfers itself to Eliza, the queen of the spelling bee.

It was "Spellbound," the 2002 documentary about spelling bees, that set the standard for anybody wishing to approach the angular packages of spectacles, orthodontic braces, giant craniums, and even bigger ears—in short, the children—who triumph in this unusual field. What that movie grasped was that these prodigies are randomly scattered across state, class, and ethnic lines, and that to listen to their aspirations, or their techniques for word-hoarding, is a joyous exercise in human curiosity. There is, therefore, a slightly deflated sensation as one realizes that "Bee Season" will focus on one child from a hyper-educated West Coast family, where high expectations are the norm. This is not to criticize Flora Cross, who gives a delicate, determined, and downright spooky performance as Eliza, but to ask whether spelling competitions should, by statute, be open to anybody whose father is Richard Gere.

There are many mysteries in "Bee Season," but the greatest conundrum has to be: in what parallel universe would Binoche marry Gere? Also, do we believe him as a Kabbalistic scholar? I was happy to salute him as a robotic fornicator in "American Gigolo," but, given that his sole means of signalling brain activity is to go very still and shut his eyes, the world of academia may not be his patch. In the role of Saul, he becomes obsessed by his daughter's progress from school bees through to the nationals, in Washington, but instead of testing her on "casuistry" and "arrhythmia," like any other pushy dad, he inducts her into the methodology of Jewish mysticism. He even lends her a copy of his Ph.D. thesis, at which point I didn't know whether to stay with the movie or run out and call social services.

The purpose of this is to jam together the two concerns of the film: the mnemonic talents of Eliza and the gulping spiritual thirst experienced by the rest of the family. The lonely Aaron wanders into a Catholic Mass and takes Communion, then meets a woman named Chali (Kate Bosworth) and finds himself sucked into a Hare Krishna community. Meanwhile, his mother invades other people's homes and retrieves earrings and other gewgaws. In the movie's neatest conceit, we take them to be proof of adultery, but they glimmer with something worse, from the caverns of her past. The trouble with these various plights is that we are required to lend them equal sympathy, and to go on sympathizing until our ears pop. What have movies come to, if Hare Krishna fails to raise a laugh?

Fans of "Bee Season" will argue that the religious impulse is no laughing matter, but the film isn't actually interested in religion. It's interested, with a cool trippiness, in what religious fervor looks like—hence the impressionistic waves of saffron that lap the screen when Aaron and his newfound pals are capering to and fro. As for Eliza, it's not enough for her to be smart. She has to be possessed, too, so that when she tries to envisage a new word it sprouts and floats around her head; "dandelion," say, gives rise to a mini-hurricane of seeds, visible only to her. This is cheating. The directors, Scott McGehee and David Siegel, have picked "dandelion" not because it's hard to spell but because it's visually cute. Would they have dared to plague Eliza with "carbuncular"? Would they risk "stegosaurus" and have plates of bony armor spring from the poor girl's spine? The irony is that "Spellbound," a more prosaic work, offered twice the revelation. You felt wrenched into the lives of the hopefuls, as you never do with the Naumanns. The will to believe is universal, but the unfortunate effect of "Bee Season" is to make it seem exclusively Californian—faith boiled down to a fad. ♦

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC., PUBLISHED THROUGH ITS DIVISION THE CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. COPYRIGHT ©2005 THE CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

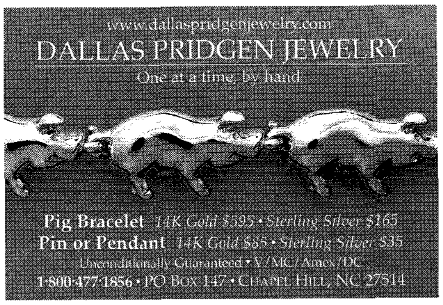
Volume LXXXI, No. 36, November 14, 2005. The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X) is published weekly (except for six combined issues: Jan. 24 & 31, Feb. 14 & 21, June 13 & 20, July 11 & 18, Aug. 8 & 15, Dec. 26 & Jan. 2) by The Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Louis Cona, vice-president and publisher; William Li, associate publisher; Ronda Carnegie, advertising director; Gail Day, advertising director; Jamie Engel, advertising director; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; Ilene Danuff, marketing services director; Douglas Chilcott, associate creative services director/promotion; L. Paul Robertson, associate creative services director/events; Jacqueline Cinguina, director of integrated marketing; Judy Safir, director of finance and business operations; Edward Klaris, general counsel. Advance Magazine Publishers Inc.: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.E.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; Jill Bright, executive vice-president–human resources; John Buese, executive vice-president–chief information officer; David Orlin, senior vice-president–strategic sourcing; Robert Bennis, senior vice-president–real estate; Maurie Perl, senior vice president-chief communications officer. Shared services provided by Advance Magazine Group: Steven T. Florio, Advance Magazine Group vice chairman; David B. Chemidlin, senior vice-president–general manager, shared services center. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. R123242885. Canada Post return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684; call (800) 825-2510; or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Four weeks are required for change of address. Please give both new and old address as printed on most recent label. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks of receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Gail Day at (212) 286-5611. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www.newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For Permissions and Reprint requests, please call (212) 286-8349 or fax requests to (212) 286-8628. To receive your issues without scent strips, please e-mail scentfree@newyorker.com. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online: www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines on the World Wide Web, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information by mail and/or e-mail, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

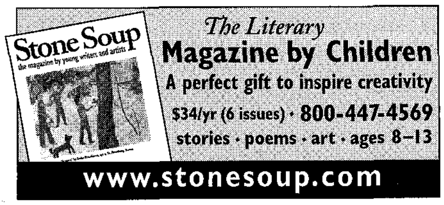
THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING. MANUSCRIPTS, ART WORK, AND OTHER MATERIALS SUBMITTED MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

Martinelli's GOLD MEDAL®
Sparkling Cider
SINCE 1868
100% JUICE
NO ALCOHOL
The Festive Alternative!
www.martinellis.com

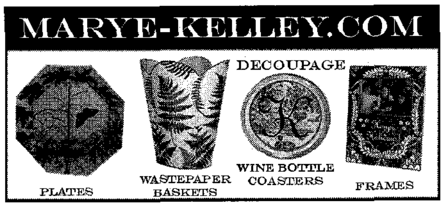
Journey Back in Time.
We offer 37 historical study tours. All are led by noted scholars and reflect our 30 years of experience. Visit www.archaeologicaltrs.com, call 212-986-3054 or toll-free 866-740-5130.
archaeological tours
LED BY NOTED SCHOLARS
superb itineraries, unsurpassed service



www.dallaspridgenjewelry.com
DALLAS PRIDGEN JEWELRY
One at a time, by hand
Pig Bracelet 14K Gold $595 • Sterling Silver $165
Pin or Pendant 14K Gold $85 • Sterling Silver $35
Unconditionally Guaranteed • V/MC/Amex/DC
1-800-477-1856 • PO BOX 147 • CHAPEL HILL, NC 27514



Stone Soup
the magazine by young writers and artists
The Literary Magazine by Children
A perfect gift to inspire creativity
$34/yr (6 issues) • 800-447-4569
stories • poems • art • ages 8–13
www.stonesoup.com



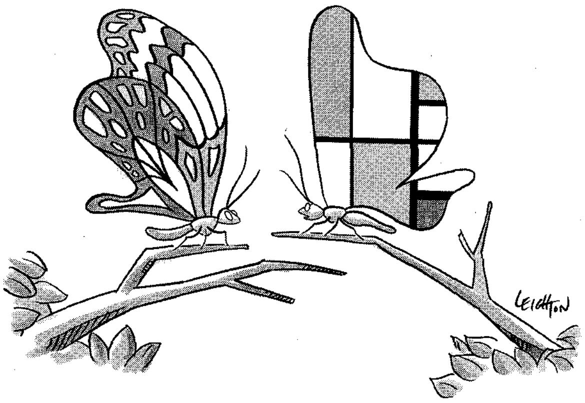
MARYE-KELLEY.COM
DECOUPAGE
PLATES
WASTEPAPER BASKETS
WINE BOTTLE COASTERS
FRAMES

The Companion to the PBS Series
IN SEARCH OF MYTHS AND HEROES
Exploring Four Epic Legends of the World
By MICHAEL WOOD
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
www.ucpress.edu

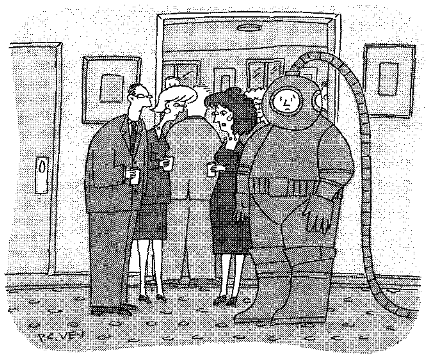
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Drew Dernavich, must be received by Sunday, November 13th. Finalists in the October 31st contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the November 28th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"But how will we raise the kids?"
Steve Hoff, Lake Bluff, Ill.



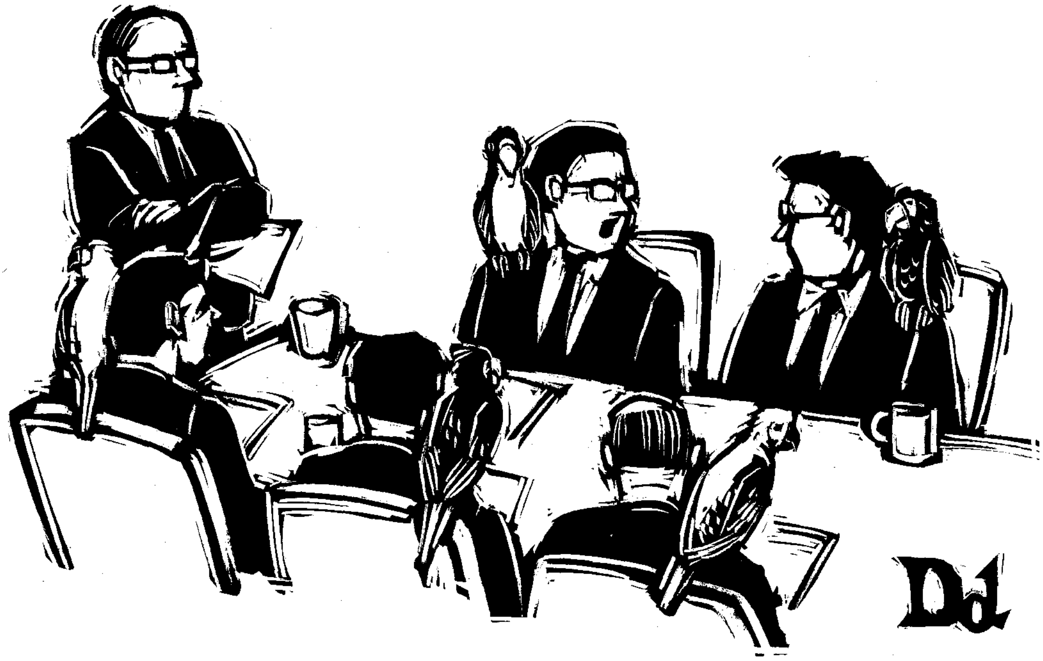
THE FINALISTS

"This suit looked way better in the store."
Adam Smith, Trappe, Pa.

"Bob just came directly from work."
Mario Hieb, Salt Lake City, Utah

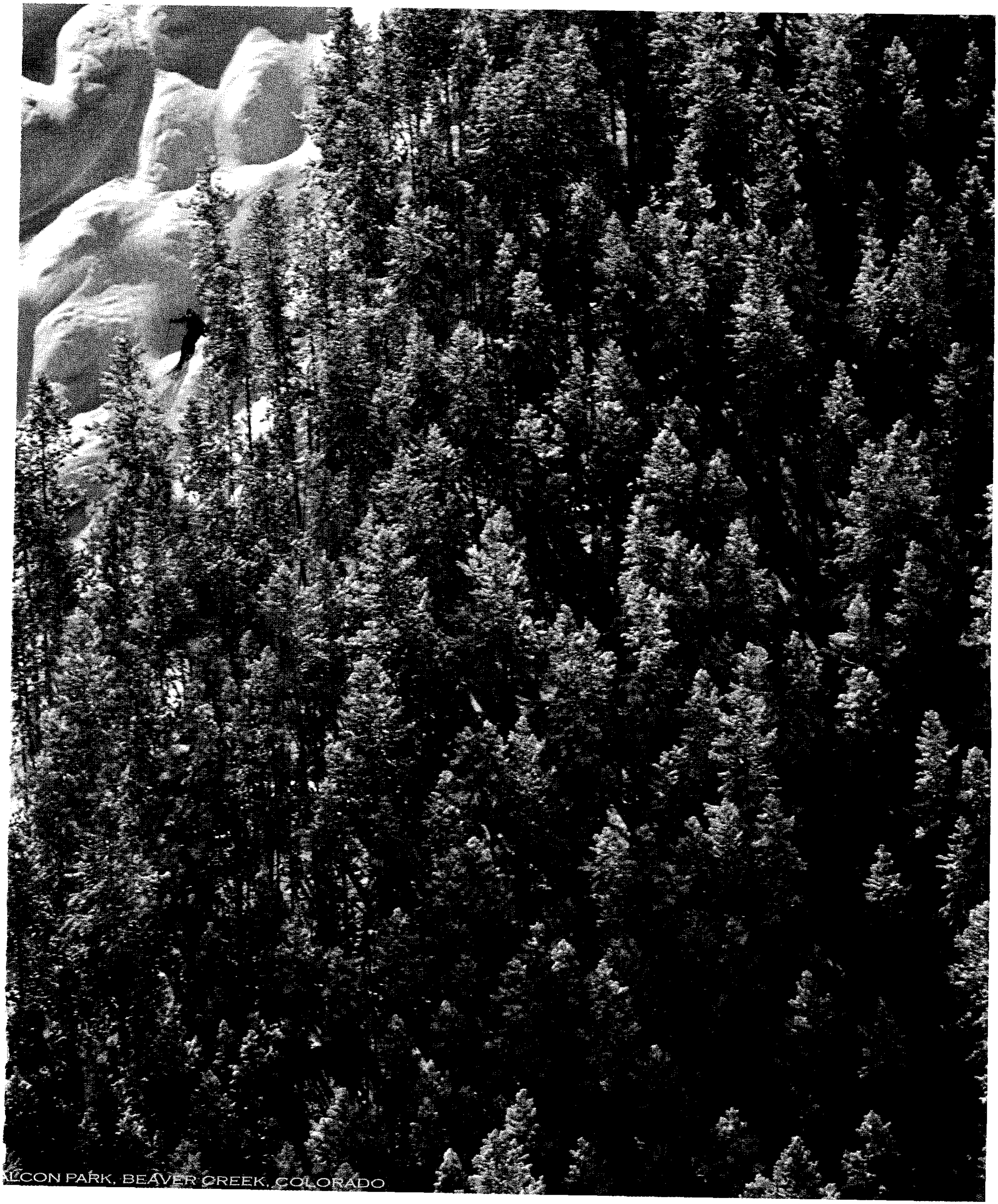
"We don't have much of a sex life, but he's good at finding keys in the swimming pool."
Paul Dorell, Highland Park, Ill.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



"   "

Bill NEVER TIRED OF PRACTICING FOR HIS MID-LIFE CRISIS.


ALCON PARK, BEAVER CREEK, COLORADO

BEAVERCREEK.COM

Beaver Creek. Not exactly roughing it.

IMPORTED
DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN POLAND
BY POLMOS SIEDLCE
40% ALC./VOL. (80 PROOF) 750ml
Chopin
POTATO VODKA
CHOPIN